



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
Department of Ohio

2011-2012
CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
PLAN OF ACTION

Department of Ohio Constitution & Bylaws Chairman

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REPORT DUE: May 1, 2012

SEND UNIT C&B TO : Susan Masten
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Shining Stars
Vi Grzybowski
2011-2012 Department President

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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OBJECTIVES

1. **OBJECTIVE** – To help bring Units that have Constitution and Bylaws older than 2000 into the 21st Century.

Action Steps:

- a. Give each District President a list of her Units showing when the last update was approved.
- b. Request they get explanation from Unit or someone who knows why (perhaps a Past District President) of why a copy is not on file.
- c. Remind Units to check their documents to see if they need to be updated.
- d. I will specifically work with District Presidents on those dated 1999 and early. (I have made copies of those and will soon begin updating by taking the Unit information and plugging in the model. These will be forwarded to the District Presidents and their UD&R Chairmen asking for their assistance in getting the documents completed.

2. **OBJECTIVE** – To change the perception that a Unit's Constitution and Bylaws are dull, boring or difficult to do.

Action Steps:

- a. This chairman will attempt to change perception by my presentations at School of Instruction and Mid-Winter and by my example and attitude.

3. **OBJECTIVE** – To encourage Unit members to read and become familiar with their Unit's document, ask for clarification on anything they don't understand, and definitely make suggestions if they have a good idea.

Action Steps:

- a. Hold mini-leadership training sessions (10-15 minutes at a Unit or District meeting; District and Unit President can help with this)
- b. Unit Presidents should appoint a C & B chairman to review the Unit documents to see if any necessary changes need to be made. If so, then a committee should be appointed to put those changes together to be presented to the Unit.

According to Parliamentarian Jim Slaughter, JD, CPP-T, PRP, bylaws can vary in size from one to fifty pages. He says like clothes, bylaws should be made to fit the organization they are meant to serve. No one set of bylaws is appropriate for all organizations.

The same can be said for our Units. You are basically structured the same but then each has individual characteristics and the bylaws should be written accordingly.

Mr. Slaughter wrote the following tips which are applicable to most bylaws:

- Language should be clear and concise.
- Sentences should be structured so that it is impossible to quote provisions out of context.
- A standard format can help in avoiding repetition and in locating provisions.

- Do not include requirements from state law or higher governing authorities (lest the appearance be given that these rules can be changed).
- If the bylaws state that elections are to be by ballot, this provision cannot be suspended (even if there is only one candidate for office).
- Make provisions for calling special meetings.
- Clearly define the duties and powers of any executive board or committee.
- List a book as a parliamentary authority to be followed at meetings.
- Describe the method (including any notice requirements) for amending the bylaws.
- Be careful not to set a quorum for meetings that is too high and may be difficult to obtain.
- Do not place purely procedural rules, such as the order of business for meetings, in the bylaws.

If you would like further information from Jim Slaughter, I've added his website address to those listed under **Resources**.

If you need to update or aren't sure:

You may email or mail your document to me for suggestions before the committee takes it to the Unit. That way you can discuss any changes you may have and any suggestions I may have if they are different. This would shorten the process time.

If at all possible:

Email me your document. Then I can make suggestions right in the document in red. You compare it to your original document. If you approve the one I email back you just change the font color to black and you don't have to worry about any retyping.

When your document is completed:

Please mail two (2) for approval. I sign the documents, return one copy to you and the other copy goes on file at Department Headquarters.

Department Constitution & Bylaws Model:

This model is on the Department Website in a .pdf (Acrobat Reader) format. If you would like it in word (97-2003 or 2007)...send me an email and I will gladly forward to you.

Please...do not send just the changes.

Changes should be incorporated in the proper places in the documents. The complete document should be forwarded to me in order to make sure it is all done correctly. If a change is made that is actually referred to in more than one place, all have to be changed. Just receiving the changes doesn't tell me a thing. Just for clarification... changes are not added at the end of the document. Over the years you would end up with many, many pages and much confusion as to what is current. If your Unit wants to keep track of the changes, keep one complete set of each revision.

IF YOU SEND ME AN EMAIL, PLEASE PUT "CB&L UNIT XXX" (YOUR UNIT NUMBER) IN THE SUBJECT. THIS IS SO THAT IF YOUR EMAIL GETS BUMPED TO MY SPAM FOLDER (I CHECK THRU THE SUBJECT LINES IN MY SPAM FOLDER BEFORE I DELETE THEM ALL.) I'LL CATCH IT AND MOVE IT TO MY INBOX.

To encourage you to provide the proper tools for your officers, chairman and members below are listed available resources and where they can be located.

American Legion Flag and Emblem Sales
PO Box 36460
Indianapolis, IN 46236
Telephone 1-888-453-4466
Order on line at www.emblem.legion.org

RESOURCES

Flag and Emblem Sales

a.	<u>National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules</u>	355.202
b.	<u>Policies and Procedures Manual.</u>	355.204
c.	<u>Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised</u>	Hardback 855.300
		Paperback 855.301
d.	<u>Unit Handbook of the American Legion Auxiliary</u>	355.200
e.	<u>Parliamentary Procedure</u>	755.203
f.	<u>Let's Be Proper</u>	355.205
g.	<u>American Legion Auxiliary Preamble Certificate 8" x 10"</u>	333.130

Books Recommended by Chris Dickey, Parliamentarian to National Convention

- English Grammar for Dummies by Geraldine Woods
- Robert's Rules for Dummies by C. Alan Jennings
- The Complete Idiot's Guide to Robert's Rules by MA, PDP, CPP-T, Nancy Sylvester

Websites

<u>American Legion Auxiliary</u>	<u>www.alaforveterans.org</u>
<u>National Association of Parliamentarians</u>	<u>www.parliamentarians.org</u>
<u>Robert's Rules of Order</u>	<u>www.robertsrules.org</u>
<u>The Official Robert's Rules of Order</u>	<u>www.robertsrules.com</u>
<u>Survival Tips on Robert's Rules of Order</u>	<u>www.robertsrules.com</u>
<u>Parliamentary Procedure Online</u>	<u>www.parlipro.org</u>
<u>Department of Ohio</u>	<u>www.alaohio.org</u>