

EXTENSION AND REVITALIZATION

CHIEF OF STAFF

December 2023

The Importance of Bylaws

The Bylaws of a nonprofit are the legally binding rules by which the organization is governed. The VFW Auxiliary National Bylaws set forth the structure of the organization and guide the Officers and Members in the conduct of its business. Bylaws are the operating manual of an organization and like any operating manual too often they are only referred to when something goes wrong.

The Officers and Members have a duty to understand the National Bylaws and ensure that the provisions are followed. An Auxiliary that cannot show that its actions conform to the requirements of the National Bylaws is vulnerable to friction among members, possibly problems with the VFW Post, and even lawsuits.

Officers and Members can protect the Auxiliary from legal challenges and misunderstandings with the Post by adhering to the National Bylaws. While Bylaws are not necessarily public documents, Auxiliaries that make them available to the VFW Post and the public increase the accountability and transparency of the organization. It is also recommended that each Auxiliary maintain a current copy of the VFW National Bylaws for reference.

A good practice is for each member to have access to a copy of the Bylaws. All members, old and new, should become familiar with the National Bylaws. Members can access a copy on Malta or order a hard copy from the VFW Emblem and Supply store, the most current edition is available now.

Code of Ethics

In order to maintain the trust and confidence of the members of the VFW Auxiliary, its affiliated organizations (including the Post), and the public, the VFW Auxiliary requires its Officers and Members to conduct themselves in a professional manner and with the highest standards of honesty and integrity. The following Code of Ethics are intended to foster an environment that promotes a high standard of ethical conduct to enable the Auxiliary to continue to carry out its mission and to ensure its continued success.

Personal Conduct and Professional Integrity

All Officers and Members shall:

- 1) Display personal integrity, avoid misrepresentation, and always be honest with others;
- 2) Act in a professional manner at all times
- 3) Promote an environment where honesty and open communication are valued;
- 4) Resolve differences of opinion in a professional and mature manner;

- 5) Respect the confidentiality of privileged information;
- 6) Refuse to engage in or tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment towards members;
- 7) Exhibit respect and fairness toward all members;
- 8) Speak highly of the organization and its members;
- 9) Promote the VFW Auxiliary and support the activities of the organization.

Conflict of Interest

To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest that would tarnish the image of the organization, no member shall take personal advantage of his or her membership role by allowing a situation to exist that is, or may be perceived as a conflict of interest.

All Officers and Members must:

- 1) Make all decisions based on the best interest of the VFW Auxiliary;
- 2) Refrain from the use of VFW Auxiliary resources for personal gain;
- 3) Refrain from influencing the selection of vendors who are relatives or personal friends;
- 4) Timely disclose any direct or indirect relationship with a person, or interest in a business or other entity, that may benefit from a decision in which they have a vote or over which they have an ability to influence;
- 5) Avoid any situation that may have an appearance of a conflict of interest.

Bi-Annual Reports

It is not too late to submit a bi-annual report for Extension and Revitalization/Chief of Staff. You may not think you have anything to report, but if you look at the resources you have available you should be able to report something. I challenge each Auxiliary President to submit a report before the end of December. Here are some hints: Have you met the 5 essentials to be an Auxiliary; have you utilized any of the meeting tools available on the National website; have you referred to or used the Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation manual?

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Stay safe and healthy!

Hope to see you at Mid-Winter Convention.

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