



American Legion Auxiliary  
Department of Michigan

**Convention 101**

Prepared by

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2022

# 10 Ground Rules for Meetings

## 1 Show up on time and come prepared

Be prompt in arriving to the meeting and in returning from breaks.  
Be prepared to contribute to achieving the meeting goals.  
Come to the meeting with a positive attitude.



## 2 Stay mentally and physically present

Be present, and don't attend to non-meeting business.  
Listen attentively to others and don't interrupt or have side conversations.  
Treat all meeting participants with the same respect you would want from them.

## 3 Contribute to meeting goals

Participate 100% by sharing ideas, asking questions, and contributing to discussions.  
Share your unique perspectives and experience, and speak honestly.  
If you state a problem or disagree with a proposal, try to offer a solution.

## 4 Let everyone participate

Share time so that all can participate.  
Be patient when listening to others speak and do not interrupt them.  
Respect each other's thinking and value everyone's contributions.



## 5 Listen with an open mind

Value the learning from different inputs, and listen to get smarter.  
Stay open to new ways of doing things, and listen for the future to emerge.  
You can respect another person's point of view without agreeing with them.

## 6 Think before speaking

Seek first to understand, then to be understood.  
Avoid using idioms, three letter acronyms, and phrases that can be misunderstood.  
It's OK to disagree, respectfully and openly, and without being disagreeable.

## 7 Stay on point and on time

Respect the groups' time and keep comments brief and to the point.  
When a topic has been discussed fully, do not bring it back up.  
Do not waste everyone's time by repeating what others have said.



## 8 Attack the problem, not the person

Respectfully challenge the idea, not the person.  
Blame or judgment will get you further from a solution, not closer.  
Honest and constructive discussions are necessary to get the best results.

## 9 Close decisions and identify action items

Make sure decisions are supported by the group, otherwise they won't be acted on.  
Note pending issues and schedule follow up meetings as needed.  
Identify actions based on decisions made, and follow up actions assigned to you.

## 10 Record outcomes and follow up

Record issues discussed, decisions made, and tasks assigned.  
Share meeting reports with meeting participants.  
Share meeting outcomes with other stakeholders that should be kept in the loop.



## CONVENTION 101

At last year's Department Convention, we had many Auxiliary members in attendance who had never been to a Department meeting before. Many of them were confused about our procedures and expectations. It is almost time to begin to prepare for the 2022 Department Convention, so it was felt that it is a good time to review.

Robert's Rules of Order define a Convention as "an assembly of delegates chosen, normally for one session only, as representatives of constituents units or subdivisions of a much larger body in whose name the Convention sits and acts". Our Department Constitution says "The Legislative body of this organization shall be the Department Convention and may be held at the same time and in the same city as the Convention of the American Legion, Department of Michigan". What a Convention is, first and foremost, is an official business meeting. As such, we should always conduct ourselves in a businesslike manner. We accept annual reports, celebrate our accomplishments, conduct ceremonies, such as Flag Processionals, graduation ceremonies for Juniors, Installation of Officers, vote on matters of importance to the Auxiliary as a whole, such as changes to our governing documents, dues increase, as well as our annual election of new officers. When we are in Convention sessions, as well as when we are elsewhere in the hotel or community, we are representing the brand of the American Legion Auxiliary and must reflect positively on our organization.

The Department of Michigan, generally, does not have an official dress code for Department Convention. However, because we are representing the organization, business/business casual is the most appropriate, unless otherwise required. The Sergeant at Arms and those presenting or retiring our Unit, District and Department colors are expected to wear white with a minimum of jewelry. Participants in the Sunday Memorial Service are also asked to wear white. This is not part of our Bylaws, but it is custom.

Our Convention is made up of Delegates at Large, Unit Delegates and Unit Alternates. All elected and appointed Department officers (District Presidents are considered Department officers), all members of Department Standing Committees, the Hospital Representatives and their First Deputies of the VA

Hospitals, State Veterans Home Representatives and their First Deputies, all non-VA Hospital Chairmen and their First Deputies, and all Past Department Presidents in good standing are Delegates at Large to the Department Convention. They are all entitled to vote based on their current or past service to the Department of Michigan. They do not have alternates (with the exception of District Presidents) and must personally be on the floor to cast their vote. Their Unit or District cannot cast their vote for them.

The number of delegates a Unit is allowed is based on their total membership thirty days prior to the start of Convention. Each Unit delegate is entitled to an alternate who will only vote if the delegate is not present. Unit delegates and alternates must have their dues into Department not less than thirty days prior to Convention. They must be a Senior Auxiliary member. Delegates and alternates must be elected at a Unit meeting not less than thirty days prior to Convention; notice of said meeting having been given no later than two weeks prior to the election. While your Unit Standing Rules may state your President will be the first nominee for delegate, it cannot say the President will be the delegate. It must be an election. Most Units elect their Convention delegates at the same time they have their regular Annual election. Alternates shall have priority in order of election. Each Unit needs to submit the Delegate form, listing your properly elected delegates to the Department office. It will be in the preconvention mailing as well on the website.

Only delegates at large, unit delegates or alternates acting in place of an absent delegate may vote on any issue, whether by voice or by ballot. On voice or standing votes, each delegate has only one vote. You do not vote your Unit strength. On a ballot vote, you will receive a separate ballot for each vote to which you are entitled. Ballot votes require an up-to-date, approved Credentials report given just prior to the casting of votes.

The Department Bylaws states the quorum for the Department Convention is at least nine (9) Districts being represented in whole or in part. If only one delegate from a District is present, that District will count toward the nine (9).

Each Delegate at Large, Unit Delegate and Unit Alternate must register with the Convention Corporation to receive the necessary ID badge to be allowed on Convention floor. The official badge needs to be worn at all times. Without the

official ID badge you will not be allowed on the Convention floor. Depending on the timing during the Convention, you may not be allowed to leave to get a forgotten badge and then allowed to reenter. This is true when it is time for the election. Once the final Credentials report is accepted, no one can leave or enter the room until the election is completed. Leaving or entering the room could skew the total voting strength and therefore effect the outcome of an election. The Registration form will be posted on the both the Auxiliary and the Legion websites and published in the *Michigan Legionaire*. None of the registration fee we pay to the Corporation comes to the Auxiliary.

The Department Auxiliary also charges a Delegate fee for each delegate and delegate at large. The \$10.00 fee is collected to allow us to publish our Annual Book of Reports. By publishing the book, we can accept all officer and committee reports with one vote instead of accepting each report separately. Convention committee reports, with award presentations are done individually. The Department office will supply the appropriate Credential form for Delegates and Delegates at Large after payment of the delegate fee. When a Unit is entitled to multiple delegates, the delegate fee must be paid for each vote they intend to cast. Example- A unit is entitled to 3 votes based on their membership. Only one person from that Unit will be attending the Convention. To vote all 3 votes the Unit will need to pay for 3 delegates. Not registration fees, just delegate fee. If they are all paid, the 1 delegate present will be able to cast all 3 votes. If only the 1 delegate fee, for the member actually attending, is paid, the Unit will only have that 1 vote. Please adhere to all deadlines on the forms. It will allow for sufficient time for the office to prepare the necessary materials for the Credentials committee to do their job.

Delegates have duties and responsibilities they need to be aware of when attending Department Convention. District Presidents have additional duties from regular delegates. When you arrive and get settle, go to the Registration desk to pick up your badge and packet, then proceed to the Auxiliary Credentials Desk to check in and receive certification of your right to vote attached to your badge. It is always a good idea to bring a copy of your paid convention registration receipt and your credential form with you, in the event there are any questions.

Unit Delegates may be sent to the Convention with instructions from their Unit as to how to vote on specific issues. Candidates and resolutions distributed prior to Convention should be discussed at your Unit meeting before attending Convention to determine the wishes of your membership. If a delegate is sent with instruction, they are obligated to vote the will of their Unit. If not instructed, they may vote as their conscience dictates.

Delegate at Large votes cannot be dictated by their Units or Districts. Their vote belongs to them alone and may be cast as they see fit.

I have not yet seen a preliminary schedule for Convention, but there may be District caucuses, presided over by your District President, to attend, as well as Convention Committee Meetings. Everyone from your District in attendance at the Convention should attend their District caucus, scheduled both before and after committee meetings. At the “before” meeting, the District President will assign a committee meeting to attend, if it has not been done previously. Your job is to bring back any information discussed- award winners, any resolutions from or for that committee and so forth. When the caucus reconvenes after committee meetings you will be asked to share that information with the others who were at different meetings. That way everyone is aware of things that will come up on the floor during sessions.

Attend all sessions beginning with the opening ceremonies and finishing with the Installation and Closing on Sunday. Take notes throughout the Convention on decisions made. When you return home prepare a report to be given to your Unit on the proceedings. District Presidents will prepare a report to be given at their next District meeting.

We have a list of procedures to guide our sessions at Convention. The Convention Rules document is printed in the Convention program. This is the protocols by which we conduct business during the Convention. The 35 stipulations refer only to the activities of the Department Convention and not to any other proceedings. It explains who may speak on the floor, processes for Credentials and balloting, recommendations and resolutions. The Convention Rules Committee may recommend changes to the rules if they feel it necessary. Any amendments to the rules will be brought before the Convention body for approval at the beginning of

the first Convention business session. Please make yourself familiar with its contents and keep it handy for reference for when questions arise.

The important business of our Annual Convention is often carried out through the resolution process. A resolution is prepared in advance and includes, not only what you want to change but also information on the reasons for the change. It needs to be written in a specific format. The sample resolution form is available on the Department website. Resolutions can originate in Units, Districts, Department Committees or the Department Executive Board. They can be amendments to our governing documents or changes to policies and procedures. Deadlines for submission of Resolutions are as follows:

- Triplicates copies of amendments to the Department Constitution, Department Bylaws, Uniform Unit Constitution and Uniform Unit Bylaws shall be in Department Headquarters not later than sixty days prior to the opening of Department Convention. Please also send a copy to the Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairman. All require a 2/3 vote for passage. Copies will be distributed to the Units at least 45 days prior to the opening of Convention. (Department Constitution Article VIII, Bylaws Article IX, Uniform Unit Constitution Article VII and Uniform Unit Bylaws Article XIV)
- Department Standing Rules may be amended or rescinded by a 2/3 vote without notice or by a majority vote, if notice has been given. If we adhere to the above timing, Standing Rules amendments can be distributed at the same time, thereby requiring only a majority vote for passage. (Department Standing Rules-Preface)
- Triplicate copies of all resolutions, other than amendments pertaining to the Constitution and Bylaws, must be in Department Headquarters thirty days prior to the Department Convention. Exception to this may be made to allow the presenting of emergency resolutions no later than noon of the second day of the Convention. Emergency resolutions are those that arise during the Convention. (Department Bylaws Article V, Section 4)

Motions can only be made by Delegates at Large, Unit Delegates or Unit Alternates acting in the absence of the Unit Delegate. Only those authorized to vote may make a motion or participate in a floor debate.

There has always been some confusion about one particular type of motion. That is “call for the vote” or “call for the question”. Often, this has led to an immediate vote on the topic on the floor. This is an incorrect procedure. Per Robert’s Rules, a “call for the question” is simply an informal way to make a motion to end debate. As a motion, it must be seconded. Before the topic under discussion can be voted on, the motion to “call for the question” must be voted on in the same manner as an amendment. The motion is not debatable and requires a 2/3 vote to approve. The 2/3 majority is required to prevent the stifling of debate for anything but legitimate purposes. Once the vote to “call the question” has been approved, the vote on the original topic will be taken without further debate.

In the Department of Michigan, letters of endorsement are the preferred method of announcing the candidacy of a member for Department office. These endorsements should be in the Department Headquarters not less than ninety days prior to Department Convention. This allows for advance notification to the membership by printing them in the *Michigan Legionaire* and through Unit mailings or emails. This does not preclude additional nominations from the floor at the Convention. Any member in good standing is eligible to seek office. Nominations will be accepted by rollcall of Districts on Friday afternoon. One nominating speech, not to exceed two (2) minutes made be made in support of the candidate. Members nominated must be present to accept the nomination and be presented to the body, except in the case of personal emergency.

The names of the endorsed candidates will appear on the printed ballot. The names of any additional floor nominations will not be on the printed ballot, as the ballots are prepared in the office before Convention. However, the ballot does have additional blank lines for write in candidates. To vote for a floor nomination, the name will be written on the provided blank line.

In order to facilitate our election, the Department President will appoint an Election Chairman. Each District will submit the name of an individual to act as a teller or an inspector. Tellers are responsible for the actual tabulating of the ballots. The Inspectors come from the Districts that have candidates. Their responsibility is to oversee the process and verify accuracy. The Inspectors do not touch the ballots. The Election Chairman, with the Tellers and Inspectors, will meet on Friday evening, following the closure of the Credentials desk to prepare

the District ballot envelopes for the election. This is required even if there is not more than one candidate for any office. Based on the Credential Chairman's report, the appropriate number of ballots will be placed in each District envelope. All ballots will be counted twice before inserting. Three sets of ballots will be prepared, to be available in the event of additional votes being required. Additional ballots may be necessary if a candidate for office does not receive a majority of valid ballots cast or for the election of delegates to National Convention, when there are more nominations than positions available. The tellers are to distribute and collect the ballot envelopes from the Districts when instructed to do so. The Department Secretary-Treasurer will do a rollcall of Districts for this purpose. Following the completed tabulation of ballots, the Chairman shall take three, signed certification sheets to the Department President. Officers are elected by majority. Delegates to National Convention are elected by plurality. The Department President will announce the results.

If there is but one candidate for an office, the candidate may be declared elected by voice vote and a written ballot for that office will not be required.

After the election, on Saturday evening, a meet and greet with the newly elected officers is usually held. Everyone is invited to attend.

By the time we get to Sunday, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. The Memorial Service, reports of the outgoing District Presidents, the Installation of Offices and any final resolutions will bring us to the closing of another successful Convention.

Are there any questions?

We will be posting this information on the Department website in the next couple of weeks. Please review it again before Convention and share it with your Convention Delegates. When everyone knows what to expect, it will help the proceeding to move along with order and efficiency.

## **The American Legion Auxiliary**

### **2022 Convention Rules**

1. All meetings of the Convention shall be called to order at the designated time or as soon thereafter as a quorum is present.
2. The Chair may deviate from the printed program when necessary or to expedite.
3. The Credentials Committee shall report at such times as directed by the Chair. All matters pertaining to the seating of delegates and alternates shall be referred to the Credentials Committee which has authority to make final decisions.
4. Members in attendance shall remain seated during the business of the Convention unless participating in discussion. No one shall be permitted to enter or leave the hall during reports or when a speaker has the floor.
5. When a delegate desires to make a motion or address the Convention, the delegate shall rise, address the Chair, giving their name and Unit, and wait to be recognized by the Chair. The floor microphone must be used.
6. All Delegates desiring privileges shall wear the delegate badge where it can be readily seen. Only accredited delegate or alternates shall have the privilege of the Convention floor.
7. Debate on any questions shall be limited to two minutes for each speaker. No person shall speak on the same question more than twice without the consent of the Convention body.
8. No delegates shall be entitled to vote both as a Unit delegate and delegate-at-large. The final decision is the authority of the Credentials Committee.
9. Each delegate shall be entitled to one vote. In election by ballot, the vote of any delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority vote of the delegates present from her unit.
10. Voting shall be by voice except when a roll call be demanded or as otherwise provided.
11. When the poll of any District is demanded by a delegate, the Department Secretary-Treasurer shall poll this District by delegates without debate or discussion.
12. On roll calls, the Chairman or acting chairman of each District shall poll her delegates present and shall announce the vote.
13. Nomination of candidates for Department President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Chaplain and Historian shall be on Friday. Nominations shall be from the floor on the call of roll of Districts numerically arranged. One speech not in excess of two minutes may be made for a candidate.
14. All candidates for Department offices must be present at the Convention and presented to the body, except in the case of personal emergency.
15. Election of Department Officers shall be held on Saturday.
16. When there is but one candidate for an office, the roll call may be dispensed with, and the nominee elected by voice.

17. When there is more than one candidate for an office, the election shall be by secret ballot. In the event there are more than two candidates for any office and a majority is not reached on the first ballot, only the two candidates receiving the greater number of votes shall be considered on the second ballot.
18. The Elections Chairman, tellers and inspectors appointed by the President shall be charged with the distribution and collection of ballot envelopes.
19. Envelopes with ballots enclosed shall be provided for each District. The number of votes to be cast by each District shall be written on the upper right-hand corner of each envelope. The number of votes will be certified by the Credentials Committee Chairman. The Department Secretary-Treasurer will call the roll and ballot envelopes will be distributed to the chairman of each delegation. When all ballot envelopes have been distributed, a ten-minute recess will be called for the purpose of voting. Each delegation chairman shall distribute and collect the ballots, assisted by her delegation secretary. The vote of each delegate-at-large present shall be cast with her District. When the ten-minute recess for voting has elapsed, the Department President shall declare the election closed. The Department Secretary-Treasurer will call the roll and the chairman of the delegation will return the ballot envelope to the Tellers. When the votes have been tabulated by the election officials, three certification sheets shall be taken to the Department President by the Election Chairman. Each certification sheet shall be signed by the Election Chairman. A majority of valid ballots shall elect. The Department President shall announce as elected the candidate who received a majority of votes.
20. The Credential Desk officially closes at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday.
21. The Convention delegates shall stand only for the Department President, Department Commander, Detachment Commander, all National Officers, and the Girls State Governor. NO OTHERS.
22. There shall be no public presentation of gifts to individuals except by prearrangement with the Department President.
23. Reports of Committees may be accepted by general consent of the delegates. If there is an objection, a vote shall be taken.
24. Any resolution or recommendation involving the expenditure or appropriation of monies shall be referred to the Department pre-convention Finance Committee before being considered. The Department pre-convention Finance Committee shall act upon the resolution or recommendation and mark its action on the resolution. The Finance Chairman will attest by signature. It shall then be returned to the Committee of origin for its consideration. This does not preclude consideration of any new business which may be brought up on the Convention floor.
25. Resolutions regarding action by The American Legion may be called for as directed by the Department President. Resolutions or recommendations in conflict with the policy of The American Legion shall not be considered.
26. All resolutions shall be presented by the Resolutions Committee and shall be voted upon individually as presented, with the exception of courtesy resolutions.

27. Resolutions in writing signed by two duly qualified delegates may be presented from the floor when there is nothing before the Convention, and shall at once be referred without discussion to the Resolutions Committee.
28. Resolutions acted upon by any Committee shall be presented in writing by that Committee Secretary to the Resolution Committee within one hour after adjournment of that Committee. Resolutions referred to each Committee by the Resolutions Committee shall be returned to the Resolutions Committee immediately after the Committee has acted upon them. They shall be marked with the action taken.
29. The Resolutions Committee shall give the proponent of a resolution the opportunity to explain said resolution. The Resolutions Committee shall report to the Convention all resolutions properly presented to them and accepted by a majority vote of the committee to which they were referred.
30. Any committee may amend resolutions before favorably reporting same. All resolutions rejected by a committee shall be marked "Rejected" signed by the chairman and returned to the Resolutions Committee.
31. A resolution presented properly and rejected by a committee may be brought before the Convention by a majority vote of the Convention body. Also, any resolution adopted by a pre-convention committee and rejected by the Resolutions Committee shall be brought to the attention of the Convention for information and explanation.
32. Each chairman shall report all recommendations made to her committee indicating those which passed and also indicating those which were rejected. She shall present those accepted by her committee for action by the Convention delegates, upon the conclusion of her report. All recommendations rejected by the Committee shall be so reported.
33. All recommendations approved at a meeting of the Department Executive Committee shall go directly to the pre-convention meeting of the appropriate committee for action.
34. Candidates for Department offices shall be allowed to hand out favors to those attending the Department Convention.
35. These rules may be amended during the Convention session by a majority vote of delegates or alternates present and voting.

RESOLUTION

This form must be filled out in triplicate and signed by two (2) qualified delegates or by vote of a Unit or District DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS, AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The \_\_\_\_\_ submits the following resolution for consideration by the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee.

SUBMITTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_ (ALL RESOLUTIONS ARE ROUTED TO THE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE)

Resolution number \_\_\_\_\_

Subject \_\_\_\_\_ (Do not fill in resolution number or subject)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS: \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS: \_\_\_\_\_

Now therefore be it

RESOLVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted by \_\_\_\_\_ at meeting held \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ (Unit or District) (Date) (Place)

Signature

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE)

Signature

ROUTING (For use of Department Resolution Committee)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Committee \_\_\_\_\_ Reject \_\_\_\_\_ Approved

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Committee \_\_\_\_\_ Reject \_\_\_\_\_ Approved

REVISION: If necessary, committee or Resolutions Committee will re-write and submit

CONVENTION ACTION:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman or Secretary