



Integrated Country Strategy

Lithuania

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Lithuania is one of the United States' strongest friends and allies. We enjoy close, cooperative, and mutually beneficial relations rooted in shared values and common interests. Today Lithuania is a full member of the EU and NATO. Lithuania is among those NATO allies spending 2 percent of its GDP on defense and is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. defense equipment to modernize its military. In 2018, Lithuania joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development following the enactment of comprehensive reforms to fight corruption, enhance transparency, and improve the business climate -- steps that directly benefit American businesses and exports. We will continue to support Lithuania in its efforts to strengthen its economic and political resilience to Russian malign influence, while encouraging Lithuania to be an active proponent for our common priorities in Europe and throughout the world as we work to anchor the Western alliance.

Our first goal is that Lithuania continues as a strong transatlantic partner within NATO and in support of our broader efforts to enhance security and stability in Europe.

Lithuania is an important advocate for increased defense spending and burden sharing within NATO, and for support for Ukraine, sanctions, and opposition to Russian malign influence within the EU and other multilateral institutions. Lithuania is like-minded on the need to increase deterrence and mobility within the NATO alliance, which will ensure we are strong, ready, and united against those who choose to be our adversaries. We will continue to augment Lithuania's defense modernization and sustain improvements through assistance and other programs that enhance self-defense capabilities, the ability to receive and support U.S. forces, and strengthen critical military and transportation infrastructure. We will engage Lithuania to advocate with key NATO allies on U.S. goals for burden sharing, readiness, and deterrence, while monitoring Lithuania's own progress toward its goal of increasing defense spending to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2030.

As hybrid and cyber security threats on the eastern flank grow, we will continue to work with Lithuania to secure its borders, protect critical private and government networks, counter transnational threats, ensure continuity of government operations, and enhance regional cooperation in these areas. When malign actors attempt to undermine our institutions, we will cooperate with Lithuanian institutions to counter these actions through coordinated sanctions, and through bilateral and regional diplomacy. We will also support Lithuania's efforts to lead cooperation in these areas at NATO and within the EU.

As we fight terrorism together and work to strengthen Europe's southern frontier, our Mission will continue to engage Lithuania's support in global efforts such as the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, the Defeat-ISIS Coalition, and other global security efforts. At the same time, we will encourage Lithuania to expand its procurement of U.S. defense articles – currently valued at \$200 million – to improve interoperability with U.S. forces and our ability to deploy together. We also recognize Lithuania's support for eastern partners, in particular Ukraine and

Georgia, and look to advance and complement their efforts. Additionally, we will work to further strengthen the leadership role Lithuania has taken on important initiatives in order to prevent nuclear terrorism, and help Lithuania to regionalize the work of the Nuclear Security Center of Excellence (NSCOE).

Our second goal is to advance strong and balanced bilateral trade that benefits U.S. businesses and exports, and promotes energy diversification and security.

As Lithuania diversifies its energy sources, we will seek opportunities to increase the delivery of LNG, services, and equipment from the United States. We also are working bilaterally and regionally to advance U.S. goals for European energy independence by solidifying Lithuania's integration into the EU energy market. This will include support for regional gas projects such as the Gas Interconnector Poland-Lithuania (GIPL) and the synchronization of the Baltic electricity grid with EU infrastructure. We will continue to coordinate with Lithuania our opposition to Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline and other politically driven energy projects that undermine the safety and operational independence of our allies.

To support bilateral economic cooperation, we will focus our efforts on sectors of growth that draw on U.S. expertise and promote U.S. exports. As Lithuania plans large national infrastructure improvements, we will encourage an approach that reinforces fair rules and access for U.S. companies, while countering Chinese influence that weakens transparency. Lithuania's increasing expertise in technology and biotechnology provides opportunities for U.S. companies and partnerships with the Lithuanian government, the private sector, and civil society. We will engage more in these areas and promote the U.S. brand of entrepreneurship and innovation. We will continue our efforts in trade promotion, supporting U.S. companies who do business in Lithuania and encouraging Lithuanian investment in the United States.

Our third goal reinforces our shared commitment to democratic principles and values that bind us in the transatlantic alliance.

We will assist both government and non-governmental partners in combating corruption and strengthening governance to reinforce Lithuania's democratic institutions and political resilience. We will also use shared cultural connections to advance U.S. interests and to build a strong civil society committed to universal human rights and Western principles. As part of these efforts, we are supporting Lithuanian advocates for tolerance and the inclusion of ethnic and social minorities, in order to eliminate fault lines that could be exacerbated by disinformation and malign actors. These actions will continue to demonstrate that our alliance is built on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. We will identify prime candidates for the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) and other professional exchange programs who can multiply our messages about U.S. commitment to and actions on all of these issues.

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As Lithuania has become a prominent international voice in supporting democracy and human rights, we will work together to ensure the promotion of our shared values as the foundation of our security and prosperity. This cooperation includes providing Russian defenders of democracy and human rights with the ability to operate in the face of danger and adversity at home, as well as calling violators to account.

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2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Lithuania advances NATO priorities and transatlantic cooperation to strengthen the western alliance and enhance security and stability in NATO's eastern flank.

Mission Objective 1.1: Lithuania continues defense investments in modernization, self-defense capabilities, infrastructure, mobility, and the means to combat hybrid threats; sustainment activities to support deterrence and enhance support for U.S. and multinational forces; and advocacy for burden sharing among western allies to fulfill international responsibilities in addressing global security challenges.

Mission Objective 1.2: Lithuania increases its capacity to mitigate cyber threats and remains a reliable U.S. ally in international fora and through other mechanisms to counter malign state and non-state actors.

Mission Objective 1.3: Lithuania effectively coordinates with the United States and other partners on border protection measures and legitimate travel procedures to include information sharing, hardware and software upgrades, and policy changes, while improving its capabilities to counter transnational threats, both nationally and through bilateral and regional cooperation initiatives.

Mission Goal 2: Lithuania advances strong and balanced transatlantic trade and investment, and remains committed to European energy diversification and security.

Mission Objective 2.1: Lithuania pursues regional energy security and diversification and the creation of a stable market for affordable energy.

Mission Objective 2.2: Lithuania supports strong bilateral trade and adheres to international economic governance standards that will contribute to shared prosperity.

Mission Objective 2.3: Lithuania pursues sound policies to support innovation, scientific research, and sustainable development.

Mission Goal 3: Lithuania remains committed to democratic principles and the transatlantic alliance.

- Mission Objective 3.1:** Lithuanians are resilient to anti-Western disinformation and malign influence.
- Mission Objective 3.2:** Lithuanian government and civil society strengthens its support for human rights and the rule of law, while increasing tolerance for religious and ethnic minorities.
- Mission Objective 3.3:** Lithuania is an active supporter of democratic reforms in Europe and globally, and increases its participation in international programs for transitioning nations.
- Management Objective 1:** Address the problem of recruiting and retaining locally employed staff because of stagnant wages.
- Management Objective 2:** Address critical life, safety, and security issues to provide a safe and secure platform to conduct diplomacy.
- Management Objective 3:** Respond to the increased operational requirements of a new geopolitical environment to ensure necessary staffing to achieve our goals.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Lithuania advances NATO priorities and transatlantic cooperation to strengthen the western alliance and enhance security and stability in NATO's eastern flank.

Description and Linkages: At the July 2016 Warsaw summit, NATO renewed its focus on collective defense and broadened deterrence beyond the traditional conventional/missile defense/nuclear triad, to include measures to deter cyber, hybrid, and other new threats. Implementation of this concept relies on allies meeting the Pledge on Defense Investment agreed at the 2014 Wales Summit – to spend 2% of GDP on defense and to invest 20% of defense spending on equipment within the next decade – and to fulfill their own defense and civil preparedness responsibilities. The objectives under Mission Goal 1 are aimed at advancing Lithuania's progress towards meeting NATO priorities both domestically and internationally. At home, Lithuania needs to continue to enhance its military capabilities, improve military mobility, meet NATO spending targets, and make effective defense expenditure decisions. Because it shares borders with both Russia and Belarus – making up about 10% of the European Union's external land border – developing Lithuania's domain awareness and border defense capabilities will positively impact the credibility of NATO deterrence and enhance U.S. security. Helping Lithuania to improve its resilience vis-à-vis hybrid- and cyber-attacks and to contribute to regionalization of defensive measures in these areas, are critical to meeting NATO goals.

Internationally, Lithuania plays an important role through its contributions to U.S., NATO and international peacekeeping operations, including in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as to the Defeat-ISIS Coalition. Embassy Vilnius will continue to work to facilitate Lithuanian participation in these operations. Within NATO, the EU and other multilateral institutions, Lithuania advocates for burden sharing within NATO, support for Ukraine, sanctions, and opposition to Russian malign influence, which align with U.S. positions. As international terrorist and criminal groups continue to seek the materials to conduct nuclear terrorism, Lithuania's role in promoting nuclear security—both in the region and internationally—should be enhanced, including by helping Lithuania's Nuclear Security Center of Excellence to find new partners and increase its sustainability.

Linkages: US. Department of State-USAID FY 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Objective 3.2 emphasizes equitable burden sharing. In addition to meeting this goal at home, Lithuania helps the U.S. to persuade other states to expend their fair share. JSP Objective 1.4 is to increase capacity and strengthen resilience of our partners and allies to deter aggression, coercion, and malign influence by state and non-state actors. These aims are incorporated in the 2018-22 EUR Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) Framework goals to increase Western allies' capabilities through heightened defense spending and burden sharing, and to increase allies' responsibility for shared security threats. Mission Goal 1 is also directly linked to JRS objectives to strengthen deterrence to conventional, nuclear, hybrid and cyber threats, and the JRS aim to ensure the lasting defeat of ISIS and other transnational terrorist

organizations. The latter is also reflected in the National Security Strategy 2017 objectives of pursuing threats to their source (including ISIS, other transnational terrorist organizations, as well as state-sponsored, regional and local terrorist groups) and to keep America safe in the cyber era.

Mission Objective 1.1: Lithuania continues defense investments in modernization, self-defense capabilities, infrastructure, mobility, and the means to combat hybrid threats; sustainment activities to support deterrence and enhance support for U.S. and multinational forces; and advocacy for increased defense spending and burden sharing among western allies to fulfill international responsibilities in addressing global security challenges.

Justification: Continued Lithuanian investment in defense is critical to better provide for its own security and contribute to a broad range of NATO objectives aimed at strengthening collective defense (Article 5) by providing capabilities designed to counter twenty-first century threats. Maintaining Lithuania's strong support for burden sharing in multilateral fora helps to bolster the U.S. message and increase the likelihood that other allies will increase their defense expenditures, meeting the burden sharing goals encapsulated in the JSP. While Lithuania will continue to devote the most attention to regional issues, it has increasingly partnered with the United States further afield, such as in the Defeat-ISIS Coalition. Maintaining Lithuania's active support for defeating ISIS and similar international efforts help maintain the support of other nations as well. Improved Lithuanian capabilities vis-à-vis hybrid threats, including by further developing inter-ministry cooperation and interoperability, as well as enhancing interoperability with regional allies like Poland, Latvia, and Estonia, will help meet the goal of increasing allies' capacity to deter aggression, coercion and malign influence by state and non-state actors, as codified in JSP Objective 1.4. The Mission will employ a combination of training, exercises, assistance projects, and diplomacy to achieve this objective. The activities under this objective do not pose any major risks. However, there is some risk that, over the longer run, economic considerations or electoral politics could negatively impact the current high level of support for defense spending, making progress on these objectives in the near term all the more important.

Mission Objective 1.2: Lithuania increases its capacity to mitigate cyber threats and remains a reliable U.S. ally in countering malign state and non-state actors.

Justification: In recent years, Lithuania has identified cyber security as a national priority as the volume and sophistication of cyber-attacks targeting Lithuania has increased. Lithuanian experts assess that many cyber-attack and malign influence methods are tested in the Baltic region before deployment elsewhere. Helping Lithuania to increase its resilience and develop new measures to monitor and combat these attacks will help

the U.S. and other NATO allies to increase resilience throughout the alliance, helping to maintain a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

Mission Objective 1.3: Lithuania effectively coordinates with the United States and other partners on border protection measures and legitimate travel procedures to include information sharing, hardware and software upgrades, and policy changes, while improving its capabilities to counter transnational threats, such as terrorism, both nationally and through bilateral and regional cooperation initiatives.

Justification: Lithuania's location on NATO's eastern flank means that its borders are the first line of defense against actors seeking to do harm to Lithuania and its NATO allies, including the United States. Lithuania's borders with Russia and Belarus make up about 10% of the European Union's external land border, giving this small nation an outsized role in preventing illegal border crossings, ensuring border domain awareness, and combating smuggling – including of nuclear and radiological materials. Embracing this concern, Lithuania established the Nuclear Security Center of Excellence (NSCOE), and is seeking to regionalize the center in order to spread best practices throughout the region. Lithuania is also an outspoken advocate for improving border domain awareness, both nationally and in the region. Helping Lithuania to develop these capabilities further and to ensure legitimate travel procedures will augment U.S. and NATO security.

Mission Objective 1.4: The Mission protects and supports the welfare and interests of U.S. citizens living in or visiting Lithuania and collaborates closely with the U.S. community and U.S. companies in Lithuania to advance shared interests.

Justification: Providing first rate consular services to U.S. citizens overseas is a priority for the Department of State, as reflected in State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan Objective 1.5, "Strengthen U.S. border security and protect U.S. citizens abroad."

Mission Goal 2: Lithuania advances strong and balanced transatlantic trade and investment positions, and remains committed to European energy diversification and security.

Description and Linkages: Having a stable, growing economy makes Lithuania a stronger economic partner for the United States, enabling us to build healthy trade relations and increase U.S. exports, and establish scientific and technical partnerships that can serve companies, universities, and start-ups in both countries. As Lithuania

diversifies its energy sources, export opportunities for U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG), renewable energy technology, as well as engineering and construction contractors, increase.

This goal links to NSC goals of promoting free, fair, and reciprocal economic relationships; leading in research, technology, invention, and innovation; and, embracing energy leadership. Similarly, this supports the JSP goals of advancing U.S. economic security by ensuring energy security, combating corruption, and promoting market-oriented economic governance reforms, as well as advancing bilateral relationships to secure commercial opportunities and fostering investment and innovation to contribute to U.S. job creation.

Mission Objective 2.1: Lithuania pursues regional energy security and diversification and the creation of a stable market for affordable energy.

Justification: Lithuania has made great strides in achieving energy security, and continues to work toward that goal. Energy security serves to support health, safety, economy, and national security. U.S. exports of liquefied natural gas, renewable energy technology such as wind turbines, biofuel, and solar cells, and technical expertise in electrical grid and gas network security will all contribute to enhancing Lithuania's energy security and a stronger bilateral partner. Since Lithuania currently imports over 70 percent of its electric power, synchronizing with the EU grid will create more diversity and security of supply that will not only bring economic stability to Lithuania, but will also provide a stable power source for NATO troops in the region. Additionally, developing more renewable sources such as wind, solar, and biofuel, will contribute to the stability of power supply, especially in rural areas. Finally, strengthening Lithuania's gas infrastructure through pipeline connections to the EU and the commercial viability of the Floating Supply and Regasification Unit (FSRU) in Klaipeda will help guarantee a diversity of supply and keep natural gas prices in line with global market standards.

Mission Objective 2.2: Lithuania supports strong bilateral trade policies and adheres to international economic governance standards that will contribute to shared prosperity.

Justification: Continuing a strong economic relationship between the U.S. and Lithuania contributes to our political and strategic relationship. In the last five years, the U.S. has gone from being Lithuania's 11th largest trading partner to 7th. These increasing commercial ties, as well as growing U.S. investment, contribute to the positive impression Lithuanians have of the United States, and set a high standard for

corporate conduct in the region. Additionally, despite Lithuania's small consumer market, it provides an affordable, stable option for companies wishing to get a foothold in the European market.

Mission Objective 2.3: Lithuania pursues sound policies to support innovation, scientific research, and sustainable development.

Justification: Lithuania has become a hub for health sciences, biotech, and laser innovation and research. This has attracted investors creating high value-added jobs. This has also cultivated a vibrant start-up culture, creating many new potential partners for U.S. companies and research institutions. This bilateral synergy has already led to collaboration in the areas of cellular research, CRISPR genetic technologies, and devices to better diagnose brain pressure that can lead to traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which will have global applications. Establishing an entrepreneurship-friendly economy will also contribute to economic stability and create more opportunities for U.S. companies to do business in Lithuania.

Mission Goal 3: Lithuania remains committed to democratic principles and the transatlantic alliance.

Description and Linkages: Lithuania is proud of its membership in the EU and NATO, and is a bulwark of Western, democratic ideals in the region. Lithuania is also among the most outspoken advocates in Europe for an ever stronger transatlantic relationship. As it bolsters its rule of law and civil society, Lithuania is becoming an increasingly capable partner for the United States, with ample opportunities for cooperation both domestically and internationally. Additionally, Lithuania has been at the forefront of the movement to analyze and address the threat of Russian disinformation and malign influence designed to undermine the Lithuanian government, relations with the U.S. and NATO, and Western democratic values. While Lithuania has taken steps to counter disinformation, outside efforts to exert a malign influence on certain populations continue. A 2018 public opinion survey showed that while the majority of Lithuanians report favorable attitudes toward Western principles and institutions, there are pockets of the population that are vulnerable to persistent anti-Western narratives.

Mission Goal 3 supports the 2018-22 State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) strategic objective 3.1 to transition nations to enduring diplomatic, economic, and security partners; and strategic objective 3.3 to increase partnerships with the private sector and civil-society organizations to mobilize support and resources and shape foreign public opinion. Additionally, this goal links with JSP goal 1.4 to increase the capacity and

strengthen resilience of our partners and allies to deter aggression, coercion, and malign influence by state and non-state actors. It also supports the European Joint Regional Plan (JRP) priorities to deepen collaboration with European allies to confront forces undermining our common values; counter Russian subversion and aggression; and, advance shared principles and interests.

Mission Objective 3.1: Lithuanians are resilient to anti-Western disinformation and malign influence.

Justification: Lithuania continues to be a target of disinformation by pro-Kremlin media outlets, which seek to undermine Lithuania's faith in its own government, the country's relations with the U.S., and its membership in NATO and the European Union. The narratives commonly seen in pro-Kremlin media outlets include: the U.S. manipulates Lithuania; NATO is harmful to Lithuania; and, Lithuania does not benefit from adhering to Western and democratic principles. The information campaign against Lithuania ranges from factual but misleading articles to blatantly false and fabricated stories. The Lithuanian government and press do a good job of identifying disinformation and debunking it before false stories become widespread; however, the risk that the general public will internalize repeated pro-Kremlin narratives and false stories remains. Supporting Lithuanian efforts to further develop the capacity of journalists and media outlets, as well as efforts to develop the media literacy and critical thinking skills of students and the general public, will help prevent harmful and anti-U.S. messages from taking hold. A common theme in pro-Kremlin media outlets is that Lithuania shares more in common with Russia than it does with the United States. Many Lithuanians, particularly ethnic minorities and those who live in rural areas, have limited exposure to Americans and U.S. culture and often develop their ideas about the United States through the filter of Russian language media. First-hand experiences in the United States and direct personal contact with Americans are effective methods for dispelling myths and building trust with these communities. A recent informal survey of Post's exchange program alumni showed that spending time in the United States increased Lithuanians' understanding of Americans and American values, and increased their desire to work with Americans. Similarly, increasing Embassy visibility in and engagement with these communities leads to developing important embassy contacts and mutually beneficial relationships. Positive, meaningful experiences in the U.S. and direct personal interaction with Americans are important in maintaining Lithuania's commitment to the transatlantic alliance.

Mission Objective 3.2: The Lithuanian government and civil society strengthens its support for human rights and the rule of law, while increasing tolerance for religious and ethnic minorities.

Justification: As Kremlin media strives to frame the U.S. relationship with Lithuania as one based solely on security and economic ties, partnerships on issues of human rights and tolerance strengthen the narrative that Western principles are also a basis of the transatlantic relationship. Lithuania has a civil society sector committed to addressing social problems such as poverty, corruption, child welfare, trafficking in persons, LGBTI rights, and the integration of ethnic minorities. While NGOs continue to proliferate and gain greater capacity, civil society leaders complain about lack of both government support and a spirit of volunteerism. The Lithuanian government has taken some steps to ameliorate social and human rights conditions by developing comprehensive plans to reduce corruption, protect children and the vulnerable, deinstitutionalize orphanages and disability institutions, and fight human trafficking, but concrete reforms are slow to realize. With respect to LGBTI rights, Lithuanian attitudes and actions deviate significantly from EU norms. As Lithuania's civil society continues to develop, it benefits significantly from increased international experience and networks. Public awareness of U.S. support to Lithuanian society also increases popular support for the transatlantic relationship and creates lasting people-to-people ties.

Mission Objective 3.3: Lithuania is an active supporter of democratic reforms in Europe and globally, and increases its participation in international programs for transitioning nations.

Justification At the crossroads of east and west, Lithuania is a powerful role model for other former Soviet republics. It is uniquely positioned to take a leadership role in a number of regional and international challenges. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) remains a signature Lithuanian foreign policy priority. While Lithuania devotes most attention to regional issues, it has shown increasing willingness to partner with the United States further afield. Maintaining Lithuanian engagement on these issues and cultivating deeper engagement on issues like democratic reforms and strengthening rule of law will be crucial.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Address the problem of recruiting and retaining locally employed staff because of stagnant wages.

Justification: Our number one management and security/counter-intelligence issue remains the growing challenge of recruiting and retaining LE Staff because of stagnant wages. Vilnius has not received a market wage increase since 2008 (for grades one through six) and 2010 (for grades seven and above). We lost 10% of our LE Staff workforce in 2017 because employees found better paying jobs. The average number of applicants per job announcement has dropped from 24 in 2012 to just five last year. Currently 50% of our LE Staff work second jobs outside of the Embassy. Low wages, often not meeting minimum subsistence levels, also increase the risk of malfeasance and security breaches by LE Staff. If not addressed soon, Vilnius will face a staffing crisis which may prevent us from accomplishing our foreign policy objectives.

Management Objective 2: Address critical life, safety, and security issues to provide a safe and secure platform to conduct diplomacy.

Justification: Even though OBO's multi-year embassy renovation project to correct these deficiencies was completed in 2017, three projects need to be completed (that were left out of the OBO project) in order to complete this ICS goal. Post's telephone system is one of the oldest in the world, constantly malfunctions, and needs to be replaced (\$1,100,000). Our server room is too small, is not grounded, and needs to be relocated to ensure stable unclassified communications (\$300,000). A former IMS was electrocuted in this server room. Unintentionally, the ventilation to our Consular section was cut-off during one of the phases of the OBO project and needs to be fixed (\$600,000).

Management Objective 3: Respond to the increased operational requirements of a new geopolitical environment to ensure necessary staffing to achieve our goals.

Justification: Post completed its rightsizing exercise in January 2018. After conducting an in-depth analysis of all of post's operations, M/PRI determined that our existing staffing plan needs to grow in order to accomplish our ICS goals. M/PRI recommends that we add eight LE Staff RSO positions, one LE Staff Public Affairs position, and 3 ICASS management LE Staff positions. As part of the \$50 million compound renovation project, OBO built a rear CAC as a necessary secondary means of egress. RSO needs to increase staffing by 8 positions to be able to fully staff this rear CAC. Public Affairs needs an additional staff member in the Strategic Content unit, which is responsible for creating all original digital content (photography, video, audio, graphic design, live streaming events), managing the Embassy's social media applications, updating the website, staying abreast of all of the Department's digital and social media policies, communicating with various offices in Washington (such as IIP and EUR/PD's social media team), and analyzing social media usage data. The addition of three LE Staff property management positions will allow post to implement the necessary separation of duties so that one LE Staff is not responsible for ordering, receiving, and disposing of post's personal property.