

THE AMERICAN LEGION
Joseph B. Westnedge Post 36, Kalamazoo, MI

March 17, 2022, MEETING MINUTES.

ROLLCALL: All officers were present, except the Finance Officer, who was excused.

READING OF MINUTES: Minutes of the February 23rd meeting were approved as written.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS and NEW MEMBERS: Steve Tolliver attended our meeting. Steve is a retired Army NCO and served 29 years in the Army and reserves. He is a Paid up for Life and member of the Dearborn American Legion and a member of the Dearborn VFW. Steve recently moved to Kalamazoo and requested transfer to Post 36. Thank you for your service and welcome to Post 36.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: (committee members are listed in parenthesis)

Americanism- Patriotic Events Committee: (Dennis Lutz, Mike Sinclair, Don Gillespie). Dennis Lutz reported that the application to participate in the Kalamazoo Memorial Day parade has been sent in. All Red Arrow Post veteran organizations plan to participate and plan to walk or ride in the parade together. We will bring our float and a truck to pull it. Three of the other Red Arrow organizations will also have vehicles in our parade group. We will all bring banners and flags, showing the crowds who we are. Our organizations have also told the parade planners that we would like to have the opportunity to speak at the Memorial program, at Riverside Cemetery.

Per the parade application- “The parade will start at 10:00 a.m., Monday, May 30, and will follow the traditional route from downtown. Starting on Michigan St. in front of the Kalamazoo County Building to Riverview, up Riverview to Gull Road. The parade route ends at Gull Road and Riverview, with a program at the flagpole in Riverview Cemetery at the end of the parade route. To attend the program, turn right onto Gull Road and stop at the flagpole in front of the cemetery. Parking will be available.” We may have an opportunity to lay a wreath at the Veteran’s memorial along the route.

Commander Saur reported that the Ft. Custer Memorial Day ceremony will be held on Sunday May 29 at 2pm. He also suggested that if members can not attend the Kalamazoo ceremony, they are encouraged to attend whatever Memorial Day ceremony is most feasible for them.

Americanism- Parade/Float Committee: (Commander Saur, Cordell Gardner). Commander Saur suggested that we set a date to uncover the float and inspect it, to determine what repairs and remodeling may be needed. After discussion, we decided to move and inspect it this Saturday, March 19th at 10am. Mike Schewe made a motion to budget “up to \$500 from our Lotto account”, for any needed repairs and remodeling. Seconded by Dan Bement and approved by vote.

Summer Convention Committee: (Commander Saur, Dave Carvell, and Don Gillespie). Commander Saur reported that he met the Dept. of Michigan summer convention planner at the Radisson this week. He ensured that we would have a room for both the 3rd District and our post. Mike Schewe suggested that when we approach restaurants and other businesses to arrange for convention attendee discounts with purchase of the State Convention pins, that we get a menu and their business hours and have them available at the pin sales table. The Michigan Summer Convention will be held in Kalamazoo, at the Radisson on June 23-26.

Youth Sports: (Dave Carvell) Adjutant Gillespie reported that West Portage and Milwood Little League sponsorship dues have both been paid.

There is nothing to report on Beat the Odds at this time.

Youth Projects: (Commander Saur). Commander Saur has reached out to the local scouts and offered them the opportunity to help with our float, as a scouting or Eagle scout project.

House Committee: Attended by Dennis Lutz and Don Gillespie. Don Gillespie reported-

1. Fire update – The ballroom will be completed by ~April. The Kitchen expected to be ~Aug.
2. St. Patrick Day party/potluck was held tonight. Great food was abundant! Thanks everyone.
3. RAR- The 2022 Blessing of the Bikes will be March 30th at 1130, food/music in pm.
4. RAR- Friday Bike Nights will begin May 13th. RAR serves burgers/hot dogs on Bike Nights.
5. BSM- celebrating their 12th anniversary as a group in Kalamazoo, 80th anniversary nationally.
6. HSC- Monday horseshoe leagues will start around May 2nd.

SAL Committee: (Steve Caudill and Dennis Lutz). Dennis Lutz reported that the next SAL meeting is next week Wednesday, March 23rd at 7pm. He also said that the new SAL squadron will have startup supply needs (caps, flag, etc.) and he made a motion that we provide \$500 from our Lotto account, as a startup fund for the new SAL squadron, to be used after the charter is approved. Seconded by Mike Schewe and approved by vote.

Search Committee: (Don Harrison, Dan Bement, and Mike Schewe). The search committee discussed several buildings which they have investigated. Mike Schewe suggested that they consider the public safety/crime rates in the neighborhoods of the building they investigate.

Finance Officer's Report: Dave Carvell was not able to attend the meeting, however he provided the monthly financial update. He also reported that the checks were written and sent to Milwood Little League and to Centrica (Hospice) for Clayton Champion's memorial.

Commander Saur will confirm our tax-exempt status and tax form 990 are up to date when he completes our taxes and has them verified by an accountant.

Membership: Adjutant Gillespie reported that as of 3/17/22, we are at ~96% renewed. We have quite a few members who have not renewed since 2019 and probably not likely to renew at this point, but they are still on our roster. They have each been written but have not called. Commander Saur suggested we focus on long-term members who have not renewed.

We have a Post 225 transfer request from Orville Smith (thanks Dan Bement).

Steve Tolliver suggested we go to the local National Guard and Reserve units and talk to them about the Legion.

SICK CALL, RELIEF, and EMPLOYMENT: Dan Bement has been battling a health issue but was able to attend our meeting. We are glad you are doing better Dan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

The new Post 36 website has expenses that will need to be covered. This is tabled until Steve Caudill can give us a report.

Commander Saur reported on the 3rd District Meeting held on March 6 at the Harper Creek post. He said that membership, renewals, and American Legion Veteran Service Officer training were discussed. There is a VSO training workshop this Saturday in Lansing. Steve Tolliver said that he is interested in taking this training and would become a VSO for Post 36, and he can attend a future training session.

Dennis Lutz reported that we had previously discussed providing financial assistance to the VFW to cover fire damage repairs that are not covered by insurance. This is again tabled until the insurance coverage and unmet needs are fully established.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: cont.,

Adjutant Gillespie reported that we have several members participating in the Drew Russell Warrior Run at WMU Sat. April 9. The planners have not replied about our sponsorship. After the meeting, further details were communicated to us. They accept donations. Donation and signup details are at this website- <https://runsignup.com/Race/MI/Kalamazoo/WMUArmyROTCWarriorRun>

The next Veteran breakfast is next week Tuesday, March 22 at 0830.

NEW BUSINESS:

Adjutant Gillespie reported that the Marine Corps League is putting flags on the graves at Riverside Cemetery on May 14th, in preparation for Memorial Day. They have invited us to help and to put the flag on Col. Joseph Westnedge's grave as we have done in the past. Start time TBD.

Adjutant Gillespie reported that the next Post 36 newsletter is nearly complete, and we can hopefully meet at the post to fold/stuff envelope on ~4/1 or 4/5. If you have information or a column for the newsletter, please let him know ASAP.

DEPARTED MEMBERS: Never Forget.

Glenn Keith – Glenn served in the US Army and Army Reserve during the Vietnam War. His memorial service will be Wed. March 30 at 11am, at the Red Arrow Ministries in Paw Paw, and his funeral is at Ft. Custer at 1:30pm.

Clayton Champion's memorial service is scheduled to be held ~6/9.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE LEGION:

The next SAL meeting is Wednesday March 23rd at 7pm. Our next American Legion meeting is Thursday April 21st at 7pm.

ADJURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 2018 hrs.

Members in Attendance: Jake Rickli, Kerry Ogilvie, Woody Worden, Dennis Lutz, Mike Schewe, Bob Edwards, Don Harrison, Brian Stults, Dan Bement, Cordell Gardner, Stan Rop, Don Gillespie, and Commander Jim Saur.