

Michigan Department of American Legion
Membership Committee Meeting Minutes
5 August 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Brian Mohlman (Membership Dir), Wendy Sexton (U.P. Membership Dir), David Yahr (DMS Coordinator), Dan Cooper (2nd Zone Cmdr), Brian Morrison (4th Zone Cmdr), Wendy Retzloff (5th Zone Cmdr), Carnel Mickey (1st Dist Alt), Michael Greene (2nd Dist Alt), Sonja Patrick (3rd Dist Alt), Brian Shumway (4th Dist Alt), Fred Youngs (5th Dist Alt), Mike Grant (6th Dist Alt) Richard Weatherholt (12th Dist Alt), Robert Kamin (16th Dist Alt)

Excused: Scott Nichols (Asst Membership Dir), Gene Nethaway (8th Dist Alt), Stan Kennedy, (11th Dist Alt), Kim Lambouris (18th Dist Alt)

Absent: Mike Globke (1st Zone Cmdr), Art Diffin (3rd Zone Cmdr), Kenneth Miller (7th Dist Alt), 9th Dist Alt Vacant, Dave McGillen (10th Dist Alt), 19th Dist Alt Vacant

Guests: Dept Cmdr Richard Dubay, Jerry Williams (12th Dist Service Officer), Leo Cowdry (8th Dist Cmdr), Carl Morrison (12th Dist Cmdr)

Quorum requirements met.

After some discussion, motion made to nominate and cast one unanimous ballot for Sonja Patrick as Committee Secretary made by Brian Morrison, seconded by Dan Cooper. Motion carried.

Minutes of the 22 July 2021 meeting were reviewed. Dan Cooper made the motion to accept the minutes with identified corrections, seconded by Fred Youngs. Motion carried.

Brian Mohlman provided the following updates regarding MyLegion:

1. Membership processing is working. Reports are still not working great, although the online renewal report is now available.
2. Biggest issue with MyLegion appears to be a lack of awareness among post leadership on how to access MyLegion. Need to remind post leaders that access has to be created using their own personal e-mail addresses and to quit using post e-mail addresses and/or old post logins. District Alternate Commanders are asked to reach out to each post and ensure that they are aware of the new process for registering and accessing MyLegion.

Brian Mohlman led discussion regarding 2022 Membership Incentives:

1. Emphasized that an active post is a growing post. Reviewed input/ideas submitted regarding activity-based incentives. Ideas included:
 - 19th District's Honor Post Program (but maybe emphasize the outside activities of the post versus the internal)
 - Creating a program that has awards for three levels of posts (large, medium, and small) and use categories from the Consolidated Post Report (CPR) as a guide for activities. Ensure that activities include programs older veterans and younger veterans would be attracted to. Avoid

including activities that raise funds for the post...although fundraising for specific programs or community events could be included. Focus on service to veterans and to community.

- Re-emphasizing communication as a key to success. Keeping members informed of what's happening in meetings and in the post...whether it's through newsletters, webpage, e-mails, etc...helps retain current membership and can attract new membership when someone sees on your webpage or Facebook page that things are happening.
- For next meeting, start defining specific activities and goals to be used for membership incentives.

Discussion held regarding how our numbers compare to other organizations since the membership requirements opened up (i.e. compared to AMVETS). What attracts people to our organization? What's the incentive for people to join our organization? It's our programs that give us an edge but that doesn't do it if we're not out in the community! Comment made that young military members have not heard of the American Legion. Fred Young shared going to the recruiting station and talking to parents and recruits, offering a dinner and a certificate recognizing their willingness to serve their country, and then inviting them back after basic training. Wendy Retzloff shared local VFW's success in increased membership with something as simple as a family-oriented corn-hole competition. Consensus is to steer away from comparing ourselves to other organizations and recognize that we all stand together to serve veterans.

Discussion held regarding National Membership Workshop. Brian Morrison commented that a lot of it was aimed at new members but the information was good. Note that the videos are available on the National Website.

Discussion held regarding Department Membership Training. Will revisit videos available. Help disseminate training opportunities when available. Remind posts that trainings are open to everybody.

Brian Mohlman led discussion regarding 2022 goals. Dept of MI goal is 56,776. Brian applied the percent increase from last year's numbers to each post's membership numbers to create this year's goals. He will send those goals out to the District Commanders and Alternate Commanders. Brian reviewed the District Goal Input Worksheet and emphasized that Districts must work closely with each post when reviewing individual post goals. Districts can shuffle proposed post goals as long as the overall total District goal is achieved. Final goal setting worksheets must be returned to Brian two weeks after they are sent out.

Discussion held regarding American Legion Welcome Packet. This is still a work in progress. Concern of overkill if Department is sending out a packet and an individual post is also sending out a packet. Don't want duplication of information and need to avoid confusion. Maybe Department's packet is more general in nature and assist posts in developing packets to supplement with more localized information? There's money at Department level for mailing. Suggestion to create a subcommittee of to work on this issue. Discuss at next meeting.

Brian Mohlman discussed changing the name of the Membership Committee to reflect National's name of Membership and Post Activities. Would require a resolution and constitutional amendment. Dan Cooper commented that post activities are appropriate when it comes to post development (membership subcommittee). Give it some thought.

Reminder that Buddy Checks (phone calls or visits) work in retaining membership.

Dept Cmdr DuBay requested a copy of incentive ideas when developed so that he can take them with him when on the road for Legion events.

Dan Cooper stated that the VA has a list of veterans in Michigan. There's a big pool of veterans we need to figure out how to reach.

Next meeting 7 p.m., Thursday, 9 September 2021.

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Wendy Sexton, Acting Secretary.