

**2017 Winter Meeting
Reconnect Committee
March 11th 2017**

Opening:

The meeting of the Reconnect Committee was called to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Taylor Room of the Holiday Inn Gateway Centre in Flint, on Saturday March 11th 2017.

Chairman Tanner opened the meeting with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were 5 committee members present and 7 guests

Minutes:

The minutes of the 2016 Fall Conference were read. It was moved by Lewis Mitchell and supported by Jack Helminski to approve the minutes as read, subject to corrections. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Chairman Tanner requested input from the committee following the review of the Reconnect Committee Rules of Procedure. Seeing no revisions were required, it was moved by Ken Pierce and supported by Jack Helminski to retain standing rules of procedure in effect. Chairman Tanner shared the draft of the Reconnect Committee Floor Banner that was submitted to Headquarters for approval.

Schutze Award nominations were requested and for the post working the best Troop and Family Support program. The award is to be presented at Annual Convention in June. More Reconnect Committee brochures were ordered and the Reconnect Committee webpages were updated and revised.

Minfly Creations embroidered Michigan Pillows can be ordered for \$35.00 with \$5.00 from the sale of every pillow being donated to the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program. Go to www.minflycreations.com to order.

The Elmobility Room has sustained water damage while in storage and almost all of the room contents were lost as well as structural damage to the wood walls inside the trailer. Insurance denied the claim stating it was normal wear and tear. The trailer is currently being evaluated to determine if it will be worth repairing the trailer, or if a new trailer would make better financial sense, as well as if those costs along with replacing the room contents would be justified to continue the Elmobility Room mission or abandon it altogether.

New Business:

The Committee has had a busy four months since Fall Conference. The committee has attended many events and district tours around the state and Chairman Tanner has been in high demand for speaking engagements and check presentations. Chairman Tanner was also asked to be the guest speaker for the City of Royal Oak's Veterans Day Ceremony.

During the Period between October 14th 2016 and February 15th 2017, the Reconnect Committee received \$46,338.03 in donations for the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program and \$9690.00 in donations for the Patriot Fund for a combined total of \$56,028.03! That is incredible! Some of the major donations received were: \$16,678.03 from the Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council; \$10,000.00 from American Legion Post 28 in Grand Haven, MI; \$5000.00 from White Chapel Memorial Gardens from their first annual Patriot 5K race; \$4356.00 from the Greater Flint Bowling Association's 2nd Annual Patriot Bowling Bash; \$3300.00 from American Legion Post 253 and the Royal Oak Community Walk-a-thon; \$2950.00 from American Legion Post 396 in Garden City and over \$18000.00 in combined donations from the American Legion Family and our community partners! The committee has awarded \$35,515.05 in assistance for the same time period. As you can see, the need is great for these programs! The success of our programs to assist our Michigan veterans and military families is only possible through the generosity and support of our Legion Family and our Community partners who believe in our mission and see the value in what we do!

The committee budget, which is funded by the American Legion Department of Michigan, covers all of the admin costs for the Reconnect Programs allowing all donations to be 100% pass through to the families we assist with nothing taken out of them and all donations stay right here in Michigan! Chairman Tanner charged each of the committee members, as well as each one of our Legion Family members to go back to their communities and convey our deepest thanks and our undying gratitude for the generosity and support shown by our Legion Family and community partners for these vital programs. Our freedom is paid for daily through the service and sacrifice of our Military Families and our veterans and it is our responsibility to ensure they are properly cared for before, during and after deployments. Many times the response from the families we assist is "How can I help? How can I pay it forward to the next family? How do I join the American Legion?" Doing the right things for the right reasons at the right time is what the American Legion is all about! Foster and support timely, relevant programs and services for our military families and our returning veterans and the American Legion will continue to attract and retain new members. Chairman Tanner urged the committee to encourage posts in their districts to hold similar events to support the Reconnect programs.

NEC Roger Webster stopped by with Leading Candidate for National Commander, Denise Rohan to learn about the Reconnect Committee programs and to share her message regarding the importance of supporting our Military Families and developing relationships with our military families prior to their deployments.

Garland Resort has once again selected the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program as its beneficiary for the proceeds from their \$10,000.00 Putting Challenge taking place this weekend at the Michigan Golf Show being held at the Summit Showplace in Novi, MI.

Tips for Troops in Grand Rapids kicks off on Friday March 17th at Post 459 with donations going to support the Reconnect Committee's efforts at Wilwin! Commander Money and President Jackson will be the guest bartenders for this event!

Chairman Tanner has been invited to meet with the owner of the West Michigan Whitecaps baseball team in May to discuss support for the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program.

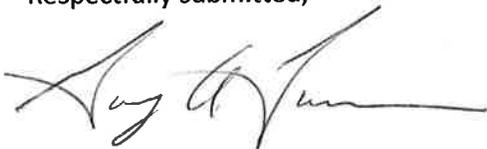
Jim Maki delivered the U.P. Reconnect report. Jim emphasized the issues and signs involved with the 22 a day Veteran Suicide crisis. Jim attended an informational event at the Jacob Eddie veterans home about PTSD and veteran suicide. Their information can be found at: www.loveourvets.org.

Chairman Tanner shared information regarding a possible donation of a timeshare deed through Disney Vacation Clubs buy an elderly couple who live in Sioux Saint Marie Canada. the couple has 20 years left on a 40 year deed and would like to donate it to a Michigan veterans organization. the cost involved would be the 1350.00 maintenance fee that would be paid annually. this property would allow the Michigan wounded and returning Warrior program to send families on retreats to Disney properties during the off-season Winter months when Resort stays here in Michigan are limited to winter sports. the committee would be able to find this annual maintenance fee as well as provide financial assistance to the families being sent on these retreats. based on our committees ability to continually raise funds to support our programs, the committee felt that we would not have any trouble raising the funds to support the annual maintenance fees for the remaining twenty years left on the deed. we would like to approach Disney to see if these annual funds can be paid in advance, but if not the committee would be willing to raise the funds necessary and put them in a trust to be used for these maintenance fees annually. the committee recommended their support for this addition to our program. it was moved by Ken Pierce and supported by Jack helminski to support this Disney property option. Motion carried.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before this committee, it was moved by Jim Maki and supported by Ken Pierce to adjourn at 2:21pm. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Tanner', written in a cursive style.

Gary Tanner, Chairman