

Department Convention Reconnect Committee

The Meeting of the Department Convention Reconnect Committee was called to order at 8:34am by Chairman Tanner in the Sugar Island room of the Kewadin Casino Hotel, Sault Ste. Marie, MI. on June 28, 2013. The following districts were present:

Districts: 1, 2, 5, 7, 12, 16
Guests: 0 guests were present.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and Temporary Chairman Tanner offered an opening prayer and a well wish for Reconnect Committee member Tom Derenzy for a speedy recovery following his heart surgery.

Elections: It was moved by Jerry Andrus of the 2nd and supported by Kenneth Pierce Sr. of the 7th to elect Gary Tanner as Permanent Convention Committee Chairman. Motion Carried.

Minutes: It was moved by Jerry Andrus of the 2nd and supported by Catherine Buckley of the 5th that the minutes of the June 2012 Department Convention Reconnect Committee be approved. Motion carried.

Old Business: Chairman Tanner discussed the High number of TFA requests received by the Reconnect Committee and stated that the Committee has awarded close to \$15,000.00 in Emergency Financial Assistance grants ranging from Eviction protection, Utility Shut Offs, Medical Assistance and Troop Support for our deployed units. 7 Wounded and Retuning Warrior Family Retreats have been scheduled so far this summer.

New Business: : Chairman Tanner informed the committee about the success of the No Restrictions Golf Foundation / Reconnect Committee Partnership. The Barrier Breaking Golf Clinic Held May 16th 2013 at Whispering Willows G.C. in Livonia, MI in partnership with the N.R.G. Foundation and Wright and Filipis was a huge success with over 50 Disabled Golfers in attendance. Over half were Amputees. They learn adaptive golf techniques to include use of the Single Rider Golf Cart donated by the Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program. Skipper Townes asked if the Reconnect Committee had been in contact with the Battle Creek VA as they have a golf course on their grounds. Chairman Tanner has been in communication with them regarding the addition of Adaptive Golf clinics and single rider carts.

The Elmobility Room has been requested for a mission Sept. 21st. We are currently seeking a volunteer team to support this mission.

Chairman Tanner discussed the ongoing 2013 collection campaign with ACO Hardware of Michigan and the 15 second PSA being run on CBS Radio – Detroit stations WOMC 104.3 FM and WWJ 950 AM. We are offering a pizza party & program t-shirt incentive awards for the top collecting store in each region. This has boosted collection amounts for other initiatives.

Jim Maki mentioned that Western U. P. veterans are becoming frustrated with the lack of access to

Legion Service Officers. They have not been able to find adequate assistance with service connected claims. Other VSO's are not able to provide the same level of representation or service. Would like more Legion Service Officers to visit and help process their claims.

The Reconnect Committee has been working to provide additional locations for our Wounded and Returning Warrior Families and as such was able to meet with the Director of Golf and Ski Operations at Treetops Resort in Gaylord. They have offered to partner with the Wounded and Returning Warrior program to offer packages for our veterans and their families.

Chairman Tanner has received several donations for The Michigan Wounded and Returning Warrior Program including 2501.00 donation from Royal Oak Post 253 which was generated during a recent Walk-A-Thon. The Returning Warrior Program also just sponsored and funded another Group PTSD Retreat consisting of 16 veterans at Wilwin Lodge with Dr. Mark Kane of the Michigan Psychological Association, and we look forward to more this year.

There were no nomination submissions for the James Schutze Department Reconnect Award recognizing the Post with the best Reconnect / Troop Support Services program. As such, the Committee accepted nominations from the floor of the meeting and Post 253 of Royal Oak was selected as the winner of the 2013 Jim Schutze Award. The plaque will be made up and presented at the 2013 Fall Conference at Boyne Highlands. Jim Maki read and submitted his U. P. Reconnect Report which will be scanned and attached to this report.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before this committee it was moved by Jim Maki of the 12th and supported by Jack Helminski of the 16th to adjourn at 9:42 am. Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted by:

Gary Tanner
Convention Reconnect Committee Chairman