

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT VA & R AND SUB COMMITTEE'S

Meeting was held at: Port Huron Double Tree Hilton in the the Ballroom 2 February 7, 2026.

Meeting opened at: 1300

Members: 6

Guest: 15

The follow members were present: Chairman Bob Gillette, 1st Vice Chairman John Perry, secretary Elizebeth Cuddington, Toni Lacari, Alfonse Vanhese, and Director VA & R Office Gary Easterling.

Subcommittee member present: VE & E Lorraine Rodriquez, VAVS Gary Bourdeau, Gene Nethaway, Frank Roche, Home Town for Heroes Ed Jinks and Reconnect Elizebeth Cuddington, Charly Mathews and Frank Roche.

Guest:

Rosemary Maciejewski Auxiliary VA & R provided information about women's veteran conference April 9, 10 and 11, Grand Rapids and further information that Auxiliary is doing for VA & R.

Tim Poxen Legislation Provided information on up coming bills that are being passed and worked and pending resolution for outside entities filing claims for veteran who are not accredited.

Minutes:

Minutes were read from September 26, 2025 in Battle Creek, MI, it was motioned to accept from Gary Bourdeau and seconded John Perry, motion carried.

Subcommittee Report:

VA & R Office: Director Easterling reported on Detroit Office the 2 new employees reported from last meeting are no longer with the VA & R Staff. New Assistant Office Manager for the Regional Office was hired and Rick Wiles has now been promoted from Team Leader to Assistant Director of the Field Service Officer and Patty Breas has also been promoted to Team Leader. Dir Easterling also discussed grants for the VSO program for both state and county. Higgins Lake August 18th, 19th and 20th, 2026 the cost will be \$250 will go on regardless of attendance

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South gate moved to Wyndotte will update the new address with Department office hours are Tuesday Wednesday and Thursday.

VE & E: Loraine Rodriguez, reported upcoming employment and traded opportunities. Provided some dates coming up for education and employment opportunities.

VAVS: Gary Bourdeau reported on the VA Hospitals upcoming events and changes.

Hometown for Hero's: No report

Reconnect: Frank Rouche reported on the homeless veteran coalition opening for veterans homeless shelter near Detroit City Airport open Feb 25th, 2026. Provided information on Make a wish program helps veterans for veterans and provided information on final salute ceremony that is done every six months honor veterans who pass away. Elizebeth Cuddington discussed working with National Guard bases and working on being part of the discharge process to provide what benefits they are entitled to upon discharge.

Old Business:

Request correction to the Department Officers and Chairman, Director Easterling is listed with vote and he is without vote.

Updated on the work in process of Post Service officer online training session quarterly to provide training and updates for veterans benefits. Working on classes, instructors and PSO list.

New Business:

Discussed how to get information out to veterans about there benefits. Also discussed post service officer reports and the need to get them completed.

Good of the Legion:

None

Adjournment:

Motioned by Elizebeth Cuddington to adjourn seconded by John Perry, motion carried.

The Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm


Bob Gillette

Chairman

W+R

m/7th meeting
2/10th Benson
to accept