



**The American Legion
Department of Maryland
Damascus Post 171
PO Box 171
Damascus, Maryland 20872**

**Steve Monteiro
Commander**

2023 – 2024

**Anita Trotter
Adjutant**

POST MEMBER MEETING MINUTES

February 12, 2024

ATTENDANCE:

Executive Committee	
Commander: Steve Monteiro	Finance Officer: Ray Lewandowski
1 st Vice Commander: Charles Bradsher	At-large Member: Mandy Buckley
Adjutant: Anita Trotter	At-large Member: Paula Gill
Members	
Jim Serritella (Chaplain)	Bill Green (Bingo)
Keith Midberry (Service Officer)	Dave Clemmer (PPC)
Sam Baughman (PPC)	Sam LeHane (Historian)
Larry Matthews	Dean Elliott
Mike Wright	Scott Dallas
Kris Bradsher	Phil Purcell
Steve O'Neal	Dan King
Forrest Neal	Bill Raab (PPC)

Commander Monteiro began the meeting at 1930 hours.

- Chaplain began the meeting with a prayer, including a remembrance of the 4 Chaplains and the 5 service members recently lost in the line of duty.
- The commander presented the minutes from previous meetings as available for review and the membership approved them.

CONGRATULATIONS!

- On January 27 we held our annual member awards presentation. Congratulations to:
 - Legionnaire of the Year: Mike Wright
 - Distinguished Member: Sam Lehane and Charlie Appleby
 - Honorary Life Members: Sam Lehane and Charlie Appleby

UPCOMING EVENTS

- The annual Post scholarship competition is now in progress. The committee has contacted the local high schools and Facebook advertising is out.
- Wednesday February 14th is our visit day for the Lorien Assisted Living home in Mt Airy. Mark your calendars for the 2nd Wednesday of every month.
- Friday June 14th is Flag Day and preparations are in progress. Scott Dallas has volunteered to take over the Post annual Flag Retirement committee. Jim Serritella has supported this program for a number of years (thank you!) and is showing Scott the ropes. Put this on your calendar for June.
- The application processes for the Department of Maryland General Scholarships, Boys State, and Girls State 2024 are now open at <http://mdlegion.org/boysstate/>.

A BIG THANK YOU!

- Thank you to 2nd Vice Kevin O’Neill for planning, hosting, and serving our successful annual awards and the following dance with the Market Street Big Band.
- Thank you to Sam Lehane for orchestrating the annual Post Constitutional Speech Contest on Saturday February 3. Sam recruited and worked with contestants, judges, and at-event workers to make this a success again. Our first place winner will now compete at the District and then, we hope, the state competitions!
- January was Radon Safety month and a high level and regular exposure is a health risk. Keith Martin arranged for the Post building to get a Radon emittance test.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Sam LeHane is asking for a new leader to take the helm of the Post High School Constitutional Speech (Oratorical) program. This would be a great place for a new member to get involved in serving the community in direct service to our young Americans. Let Sam or the Commander know if you want to know more. Sam will be there to help you learn about the expectations of the program.
- Bill Green reported that the person who has been organizing our student volunteers in the Bingo snack bar will be leaving the Post soon (moving out of state). We need a new coordinator for this group.
- The annual Damascus Days, complete with fireworks in our backyard, will be July 12. Anyone that would like to plan around that event should start now. We’re considering options such as hosting a concert on our lawn before the fireworks, giving out water and/or food, being in the parade, etc. What do you want to do?

OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

SECOND VICE

- 2nd Vice was absent, but the Adjutant reported after-action on the recent Membership Event and band/dance on January 27. For the band performance we planned food for 100 attendees, and we had 96, not including Legion/Unit members. There were 66 paying public, 12 kids (free), and 18 band members.
- We budgeted \$1000 and spent around \$800. We agreed that we could have spent more. We will take lessons learned into consideration if we do this again next year.

COMMANDER

- Commander Steve reported on the Executive Committee discussion of our need for a Capital Reserve Fund to cover a 20% deductible if we were to face large building repair or replacement bills.
 - EC presented to the Membership that we make a mid-year budget correction to move the \$20,000 endowment from George Boling to fund this capital/emergency fund. EC will then establish criteria for utilization of the funds and future budgeting to fund it after the \$20k.
 - Membership approved this proposal.
- Commander will get the Buddy List assignments and suggested script out this week.
- Commander reported on some District and Region activities. We attended the District 8 meetings and Region 4 meetings in the past two weeks.
- Commander reported that the District voted to continue the convention hospitality room (for \$18,000) but that Post 171 and a few others were on the record as not committed to any support funds (as our membership voted).

FINANCE OFFICER’S REPORT

- The Finance Officer presented the monthly report. FO reported that January had more expenditure than usual, with the \$16,000 bingo machine and \$5000 to get them up to date on their bingo profit sharing.

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- FO notes that he completed IRS 1099's for all people who received more than \$600 working for the Post in 2023. This was difficult this year, as we were missing information. Going forward, every individual that we pay for work needs to complete the IRS forms before the work is paid.
 - FO asks that anyone that spends for the Post and receives a check from him – cash it as soon as possible. Holding checks makes his bookkeeping more difficult.

JUDGE ADVOCATE

- Judge Advocate Fred Mitchell is leading the Election Slate activity this year. We currently have members interested in all Post positions except the important leadership position of Adjutant. As Adjutant, you'll serve the Post and Commander administratively and the community in steering our way in how we interact with our town.

ADJUTANT

- Adjutant noted that the Post is doing well financially and we haven't yet discussed any charitable giving this year. A major Post goal, and why many members join, is to give back to our community. EC and Membership may propose more giving opportunities as needs arise. Last year we donated \$500 each to four organizations. EC proposed a request for \$500 to these this year:
 - *Southern Maryland Youth Camp*. Located in Cheltenham, Maryland, the aim of the Southern Maryland Youth Camp is to provide camping and recreational activities for our young people, including those with disabilities. [Click here to learn more.](#)
 - *Warrior Canine Connection* (supported last year). Located in Boyds, MD, Warrior Canine Connection is a pioneering organization that utilizes a Mission Based Trauma Recovery model to help recovering Warriors reconnect with life, their families, their communities, and each other.
 - *Damascus Help* (supported last year). Provides assistance to needy persons and families in the form of emergency food, holiday food baskets and gifts, transportation referrals, furniture, and emergency financial assistance.
 - *Mission Believe, Heroes for Honey*. Their goals include helping returning service members with the transition to civilian life and suicide prevention, and to provide healing through beekeeping. This is a target cause for the Maryland Auxiliary in 2023-24. Since it's in nearby Westminster, MD, Will Trotter, Unit President, noted that they are planning a visit there when the weather permits. [Click here to learn more.](#)
- Members added a fifth target, that we supported last year:
 - *No Person Left Behind, Outdoors*, in Mt Airy
- Membership approved a donation total of \$2500 split between these five targets.

MEMBERSHIP

- Membership Chair, Sam Baughman, presented the membership stats. As of 2/16, we have 280 members (+2 from last week), 94.915%, still 4th in District, 45th in State.
- Sam presented one new member to vote in. We approved Malintha Liyanage.

BINGO

- Lead Bill Green reported that our Bingo equipment is working well and bingo is going great!
- Attendance has been up over the past month and we've gained quite a few never-before players.

RENTALS

- Rental Agent presented the need to do a face-lift on the Main Hall. There are holes in walls, broken trim, and it needs to be repainted, among other fixes. Each week we struggle with the curtains over the bingo boards, as the pull-rods no longer function. Finally, the wall sconces are very dated and some need new shades. RA proposed a \$2250 budget for basic repairs, including new light sconces (not shades) and bingo board shades (retire the curtains). EC approved \$2000. The estimate does not include any

paid/outside labor, so the work will be done over the span of a couple months. The RA will prepare a punch list and arrange the work around bingo nights and rentals.

BASEBALL

- The Post 171 Baseball program is in search of new coaches and has some positive possibilities.
- The schedule for summer play is in progress and will be out soon.

HOUSE AND GROUNDS

- Chair Mike discussed a lot of on-going work in our plumbing and sewage issues. A search of all the architectural drawings for the original building and all its add-ons did not show where the sewage connects to the WSSC system. This is an issue because we have some blockages.
- Mike found, examined, and replaced a couple of water and air filters that haven't been changed in a while. In addition, the large ice machine needs a filter change and is leaking, so that is the next job.
- Mike will be arranging the 1-year contract on the boiler and HVAC.
- Bill Green reported that he trimmed some tree limbs that were overhanging the Post driveway. The Parks department is scheduled to cut down the two large dead trees on the north side of the driveway.

SAFETY

- Chair Keith Martin kicked off this new committee. After checking with other Posts, they learned that no one has a Safety Master Plan that we can learn from. So they'll write one and we'll be the first!
- They started last week by getting a radon test. The results indicate a low level but high enough that they recommend we purchase an abatement system. EC proposed an abatement system for the two basement rooms, at the rate of \$3100 for both. Membership brought up other possible options including doing nothing for now, since the Post building is not a residence. Ultimately membership approved the option to purchase two monitors, for \$300, so that we would know if/when we need to re-consider abatement.

OTHER

- Keith Martin has an appointment to review the Post insurance policy with our insurer Erie.
- Post Service Officer reported that the Pact Act has been updated to include some Vietnam Era issues. Members are encouraged to check into this or call him if more information is needed.
- The volume of the big band practicing upstairs interfered with this meeting. The Adjutant will address the issue and possible solutions with the band. Options include ending their rehearsal by 7:30pm on member meeting days.

Meeting Adjourned:

Chaplain closed the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 2040 hours.

Approved by the Executive Committee via email, February 18, 2024.

Submitted by:

Anita Trotter

Post 171 Adjutant