



**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
January 15, 2024**

ATTENDANCE:

Executive Committee	
Commander: Steve Monteiro	Finance Officer: Ray Lewandowski
1 st Vice Commander: Charles Bradsher	2 nd Vice Commander: Kevin O'Neill
Judge Advocate: Fred Mitchell	At-large Member: Keith Martin
Adjutant: Anita Trotter	At-large Member: Paula Gill
Members	
Jim Serritella (Chaplain)	Bill Green (Bingo)
Will Trotter (PDC)	Dave Clemmer (PPC)
Sam Baughman (PPC)	Sam LeHane (Historian)
Larry Matthews	Dean Elliott
Mike Wright	Scott Dallas
Cary Henry	Phil Purcell
Ching Yao Yu	Dan King
Sean Egan, new member	

Commander Monteiro began the meeting at 1932 hours.

- The meeting took place over the internet on Zoom, due to heavy snowfall conditions in the area.
- Chaplain began the meeting with a prayer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Be sure to attend the annual Post and Unit Member Awards Event on **Saturday January 27th**. This year we'll present our annual awards and then invite the public in for hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and a big band for entertainment and dancing. The event is free for Post and Unit Members, \$5 per adult 18 and over for non-members (friends, family, and the public after the awards ceremony). The agenda is:
 - 6:00 pm – doors open to Post and Unit Members and family only
 - 6:15 pm – 7:15 pm – Presentation of annual Post and Unit 171 service awards
 - 7:30 pm – doors open to the Public
 - 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm – Market Street Big Band plays
- The Post Constitutional Speech Contest is coming soon, on **Saturday February 3**. Sam has two speakers ready to compete. Will Trotter reports that of the 8 districts in the state, 6 will present contestants at the March 27 state contest. That is up from previous years.
- The annual Post scholarship competition will begin soon. Chair Ray Lewandowski reported that the materials will go up on the internet and to area high schools by the end of January.
- 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 Mike Wright who completed installation of the eight security cameras on the outside corners of the building. We'll get signs up soon regarding video surveillance and then start recordings.
- Thank you to Keith Martin for organizing and hosting another successful blood drive with the Red Cross. Our goal was 30 units and we collected 42. Way to go! The next blood drive at the Post will be Friday, July 12th.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- The Post 171 Baseball program is in search of new coaches. Contact Fred or Keith Martin for more information.
- Sam LeHane is asking for volunteers at the upcoming Constitutional Speech Contest (Oratorical). The commitment will be between 10am and 2pm on that day.
- Jim Serritella would like someone to take over the annual Flag Retirement committee. Jim has all the procedures and notes; he would be glad to train the new volunteer. Jim has been doing this duty for years and it would be a great way for someone to get involved with the Post but not over-commit. It's only once a year!
- We're forming a Safety Committee to look at other needs, such as first aid kits, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, fire alarm pulls, and more. If you have expertise in and would like to contribute to this need, please let an officer know.
- We're forming a small committee to review our building and liability insurance needs. If you have real estate, business, or home insurance expertise, we need you!

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

- The Finance Officer presented the monthly report. FO reported that we are underspending on the budget, though some of that is owed to the Unit for their bingo snack bar support.
- Per request, FO will compare expenditures on heating oil this year and last year...we want to know how the new boiler is performing.

MEMBERSHIP

- Membership Chair, Sam Baughman, presented the membership stats. As of 1/15, we have 270 members (+4 from last week), and 91.525% of target. We are still 2nd in District and 30th in State, down from 27th last week.
- Sam presented two new members to vote in. Both were approved:
 - Sean Egan, Marine
 - Mike Towles, Army

POST OFFICER AND COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

- Per our bylaws, Post 171 will elect seven new officers and four at-large members in May and install them in June. That means that the candidate slate should be complete and out for member consideration in April and interested candidates should be making their desires known in February or March.
- Judge Advocate Fred Mitchell is leading the Election Slate activity this year. The Post has a lot of opportunities to lead in the community next year. If you would like a larger input into the directions we take, now is the time to put your name in as a leadership candidate. Let Fred know soon.

HOUSE AND GROUNDS

- Mike Wright reported that installation of the exterior security cameras is complete. The EC will discuss which Post roles will have access to the feeds and what to do about any incidents that might occur. Until then, only 2-3 people have access. So far they show many neighbors walking dogs, cats prowling at midnight, and cars going by. Mike will adjust the cameras to limit incident reporting.
- Mike showed a decoration/lamp made out of tank shells. The item was gifted to the Post but needed to be cleaned up and reassembled. We all agreed Mike can make a lamp out of it for display at the Post.

BINGO

- Our Bingo equipment is over 10 years old, and it acts up regularly. At this meeting we discussed and approved purchase of a new machine. We have two quotes, both for \$17,200, and we expect a third quote. We'll decide upon and begin the purchase after receipt of the third option. Though it is expensive, this machine is the basis of Post 171's income to pay our bills and have funds to contribute to the community!
- We will determine later whether to try to sell the old machine or to keep it as a backup.

OTHER

- January is Radon Safety month and a high level and regular exposure is a health risk. Keith Martin is leading an effort to get the Post building Radon emittance level measured, and then treated if necessary. The cost of the test will be \$252. Connected to that, Keith also submitted a proposal for an overall safety committee. Members approved this, with the caveat that a draft safety plan be presented in not more than six months.
- Keith also reviewed the Post insurance policy and explained at this meeting that we seem to be underinsured and our insurance does not properly account for property replacement costs in the case of a catastrophic loss. In addition, we need to see if we get discounts for the new video surveillance and if our new bingo machine will be covered. It all fits together!

Meeting Adjourned:

Chaplain closed the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 2045 hours.

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

Submitted by:

Anita Trotter

Post 171 Adjutant