

Bloomington Post 550

Monday, November 13, 2023, Minutes

- Meeting called to order by 1st Vice Commander Blaine Beste.
- Colors presented, prayer offered. The POW flag was placed on an empty chair. Pledge and Preamble recited.
- Guests:
 - Department of Minnesota Junior Auxiliary Honorary President Taylor McElroy. She presented her fundraising project to raise funds for Northfield-based Believeit, which provides service dogs for veterans.
 - County Veterans Service Officer Kristy Janigo. She requested assistance for a veteran in need.
- Roll call of officers: Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, Finance Officer, Sergeant-at-Arms excused.
- Printed copies of the October Minutes distributed. Mead moved, Campero seconded, and the minutes were approved.
- Commander: 1st Vice Commander Blaine Beste reported on Veterans Day Activities including American Legion Post 550 Honor Guard presenting the colors at the official Minnesota Veterans Day Program in Inver Grove Heights and a flag-raising and a gun salute at Bloomington Veterans Center. From the Inver Grove Heights event, the honor guard was pictured in the Star Tribune on Nov. 12 and shown on local television.
- Adjutant: Warren Christopherson reported minor success in renewing members by contacting those members who dropped off the membership roll in 2021 and 2022. Thank you to the members who volunteered to call these veterans. We likely renewed three members with the effort. Bonnie Proctor will mail out letters to the members from the 2023 list that have not yet renewed for 2024.
- Chaplain: Jim Mead offered a prayer for Jerry Narragon, U.S. Air Force veteran, a 30-year member of Post 550, and our longtime finance officer. He died Oct. 30.
- A Financial Report will be provided next month as we search for a replacement Finance Officer. Tim Engstrom motioned for authorization to increase the pay for the Finance Officer to \$300. Paul Hassing seconded, and the motion carried.
- Membership: Paul Hassing reported that renewals for 2024 is at 242. This is 75 percent of the 325 the department has set as our goal. Post 550 set a self-goal of 400 for 2024.
- Gambling Manager: Tim Engstrom provided the gambling report for October. He noted that the Shantytown Grill is in operation as a second gambling premises for Post 550.
 - The Post 550 Gambling Committee recommended approval of \$12,455.91 for the following to be donated:
 - 10th District Commander's Project, Operation Welcome Home, Stewartville: \$2,000
 - KHS Swimming Team Scoreboard third payment: \$2,500
 - Taylor McElroy's Project, Believeit: \$1,000 in Nov., \$2,000 in December
 - Veteran housing security: \$2,600
 - Veteran housing security: \$1,455.91
 - Kennedy Baseball Booster: \$1,400
 - Bloomington Historical Society: \$1,000

- Kennedy Boys Hockey Boosters: \$500

A motion was made by Stachour and seconded by Campero to approve donations. Motion carried.

- Gun Safety: The next course is planned for April 2024. Eight-hour web-based training is required before one-day range training in April. Gun Safety questions, contact Ken Lundgren 612-812-0854
- Legion Riders: The Department Pearl Harbor Rally will be at Paynesville Post 271 on Dec. 9.
- Sons of the American Legion reported 35 paid members for 2024.
- Unfinished Business:

- Tim Engstrom informed us that the website is still in Process. They need to get the accept-payment figured out, and the person who was working on it left Soulo for another job.

- Rick Warren urged members to sign up for the Bloomington Remembers Veterans Memorial Dog Tags. The \$350 cost will help build the memorial and your dog tag will be on the Bloomington Veterans Memorial for future generations. Your military service story will be available for anyone to view by simply scanning the QR Code on your dog tag.

Contact: BloomingtonVeteransMemorial.org/dogtags or call 952-563-4622 for more information
Additional discussion ensued regarding the memorial and additional information will be provided at future meetings.

• New Business:

- Fran Stachour thanked the Post for contributing to the Bloomington History Center.

- With the second gambling site now operational, Tim Engstrom motioned for a \$5,000 each increase in pay for the Gambling Manager, and two Assistant Gambling Managers. Mead seconded, and the motion carried.

- Dues will increase at the national, department and district levels. A decision will be necessary soon for the post to increase dues or keep them the same.

- A motion was offered by Paul Hassing to support Kristy Janigo for 10th District Commander. The motion was seconded by Tim Engstrom, and the motion carried.

- Prayer was offered.
- POW Flag was recovered.
- Colors retired.
- The meeting was adjourned.

— Adjutant Warren Christopherson