

American Legion, Edward L. Grant Post 75

43 Main Street, P.O. Box 42

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Minutes of the in-person meeting that was held on 10 January 2024.

Meetings are normally held at 23 Hutchinson Street, Franklin, MA
on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 1900.

Officer Roll Call:

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|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Commander - John Milot | Present |
| Senior Vice Commander - Dick Hynes | Present |
| Junior Vice Commander - John Hefele | Excused |
| Adjutant – Joe Landry | Present |
| Finance - Dave Labonte | Present |
| SGT at Arms - Matt McGrath | Present |
| Chaplain - Bob Markunis | Excused |
| Historian - Steve Szilniczky | Present |
| Service Officer - Shannon Nesbitt | Present |
| Quartermaster - Frank Coughlin | Present |

11 Members were in attendance.

Meeting called to order by Commander Milot at 1907.

- Opening prayer was offered by Senior Vice Commander Hynes, Colors were posted by SGT at Arms Matt McGrath. Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all, Preamble of the Constitution of the American

Legion was recited by all. A moment of silence was requested by Commander Milot to honor the dearly departed.

Reading of Minutes:

- Copies of the minutes of the November meeting were passed out to all present. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes. The motion was accepted, and the minutes are now posted on the Legion Post 75 website. (There was no meeting in December).
- A discussion was held regarding a social gathering at the Rome Restaurant. This would not be a meeting. Matt McGrath said that he would contact the restaurant and find out what our options would be. Dick said that he will ask John Hefele to send out information to members when a date has been selected. The gathering would be held in late January or early February.

Reading of Communications and Bills (Dick Hynes):

- Information on the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds was passed out regarding Veterans and past Veterans.

Finance Officer report (Dave Labonte):

- Copies of the financial report for November and December were passed out to all members. A motion was made and seconded to accept the finance reports. The motion was accepted, and the financial report was posted on the Legion Post 75 website.
- Dave reported that he had written two checks to Chaplain Bob for \$210.34 for Operation Care Package. He reported that he was unsure if he had accidentally cut two checks in error, so he reached out to Chaplain Bob for clarification. As of this meeting, he had not gotten a response from him.
- Eileen Watkins donated \$50.00 to the War Memorial Fund.
- A motion was made and seconded for the Post to donate \$1000.00 for the War Memorial Fund from the Bruce Watkins money. The motion was accepted, and the donation will be made.

Senior Vice Commander report (Dick Hynes):

- Membership for the Post is at 105.3% for the year. He noted that there are only two Posts with 100% or higher in the district (Plainville is at 106%). He also noted that Post 75 is 6th in the State. Dick said that a lot of this is due to the Adjutant using "Mylegion" for processing renewals online. Overall, the County is at 80.6%.
- Dick reported that a new report ("Post Health Status Report") has been established by the Department. This report shows Post 75 with 26 unpaid members.
- The Post was presented with a "Post Membership Retention" award, which is presented to those Posts with 90% or higher membership percentages.

Junior Vice Commander report (John Hefele):

- No report.

Historian report (Steve Szilniczky):

- Steve is still asking for a four-drawer file cabinet for the Post's historical artifacts. He is also hoping to get a display case for items to be displayed.
- Steve would like to get the Post's memorabilia digitized in case a disaster strikes and they are destroyed.
- Shannon suggested that he might be able to display things at the town hall after the Veteran's Council finishes their display.

Quartermaster report (Frank Coughlin):

- Frank said that he has a few jackets for sale. Joe Collins wants an extra-large jacket.
- Steve Szilniczky noted that uniform pants that are purchased through “Flag & Emblem” are equivalent to a “mortgage payment” and was wondering if the Post could assist with the cost of pants for the members. Commander Milot suggested that the Post could pay for the pants upfront, and the member could then pay off the cost in installment payments. Dave noted that there is \$1,300.00 in the Quartermaster fund. Shannon said that she was told that blue slacks would be acceptable for a uniform. She was also told that “Flag & Emblem” sells gold stripe material, and that this could be added to her slacks. Commander Milot made a motion to buy a pair of pants for Steve through the Post. The motion was seconded, and Steve will work with the Quartermaster to order them.

Chaplain report (Bob Markunis):

- No report.

Old business:

- Dawn Anderson made a request for another volunteer to sit with Ronald Seyffert on Tuesday nights so that his wife can go to her singing group. Right now, there are three members who do this, and she would like to get one more volunteer.
- Dick said that he has been trying to connect with Tri-County Vocational School to make them aware of the “Trooper Cadet Program”. He said that he will go to the school to see if he can make a connection in person.
- The Post will award two \$500.00 Scholarships to two graduating students of Franklin High School, Class of 2024.
- Dick said that the meal at the VFW was very good. It was a nice opportunity to meld with our VFW brothers. We paid \$125.00 for each wreath (qty 2) and their share is \$62.50.
- Dick said that he and Commander Milot will go to Franklin High School so that they can talk to the guidance counsellor about Boys State and Girls State.
- The Buddy Check program is not ready yet. Dick said that it will be ready by the February meeting.
- Dick said that the Legion now has a three-year membership option for those members who wish to take advantage of it. There is no discount for doing this.

New business:

- The new National Commander of the Legion is having a banquet at the Best Western Royal Plaza in Marlboro on April 6th. The tickets are \$45.00 each. Commander Milot made a motion for the Post to pay for four tickets. The motion was seconded and approved.
- Lisa McPhee, the Department Adjutant sent out a notice to have all Posts report if they are using “Mylegion” for their renewals and reports. The Adjutant notified her that he is taking full advantage of it.
- Dick talked about the “Million Veteran Program”, which is the largest research program dedicated to improving Veteran’s health. The focus is on such things as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc. He encouraged all members to sign up for this. The website is www.mvpva.gov.
- Dick said that Nelson Blake will be next year’s Commander. On April 21st, there will be a fundraising banquet.
- Dick gave Dave Labonte information about “Best Business Practices for Finance Reports and Banking” that he received.
- The VFW and Post 75 talked about the program for honoring Franklin’s fallen veterans on the common. A steel frame and two wreaths were purchased from Stobbart’s Nursery. A letter was sent to Bugler Tim O’Toole, who plays Taps for “Taps Across America” so that he can play Taps. John Hefele will

perform this role in his absence. There are 45 monuments on the Veteran's walkway that will be honored. Each fallen Veteran will be honored on the day that they died. Dick created four notebooks with the names of all the Veteran's information. Copies of the book will be given to the VFW, the VSO office, Tim O'Toole and one will be for the Post.

- Shannon talked about flags being flown on the common and how they are displayed. If the flag is flown on town property regarding government speech, then the town has control over the flag. Some towns have a flagpole for public speech and groups are allowed to fly their flags on that pole. One group wanted to fly their flag but was refused. They sued and won their case. Shannon cautioned that we should make sure that we retain control of what happens on the Veteran's walkway.

For the good of the Legion:

- Frank Coughlin talked about the wreaths that were placed at the Veteran's Cemetery in Bourne as part of "Wreaths Across America". They had run out of wreaths by the time our group got there. The suggestion was made to get there earlier next year.

Closing the meeting:

- Senior Vice Commander Hynes led the members in prayer and Colors were retired by SGT At Arms Matt McGrath.
- The meeting was adjourned by Commander Milot.