



American Legion
Department of Wisconsin
8th District Spring Conference

Spring 2018 Conference Minutes April 21, 2018
Post 226, Manawa, WI

1. District Commander Ron Fregien called the meeting to order at 0900 hours. The colors were posted and all present rendered a hand salute. Chaplain Theama gave an opening prayer. The First Vice Commander read Resolution 228 and the POW/MIA flag was placed on the empty chair. The First Vice Commander also led the Legionnaires in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Third Vice Commander led the Legionnaires in the recitation of the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.
2. Commander Fregien declared the meeting open and called for the roll call of officers. Adjutant Herminath called the roll. There were 65 Legionnaires from 25 Posts present.
3. Commander Fregien called for the reading of the minutes. Adjutant Herminath said the 2017 Fall Executive Committee and 8th District Fall Conference minutes have been available for perusal on the 8th District website for several months. He asked that the minutes be accepted as written. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes. The motion passed.
4. Commander Fregien introduced Allen Watry, Vice Commander of the Sons of the American Legion of Wisconsin for Districts 6, 8, and 9. Allen thanked the Legionnaires for their support of SAL Squadrons in the 8th District, the Josh Dog program, and encouraged everyone to continue their excellent support for the military honors program.
5. Commander Fregien then introduced the guests.
6. Commander Fregien asked Post 226 Commander Mark Melton to welcome the attendees. Mark wished everyone a productive and enjoyable day.
7. Commander Fregien then read a list of 8th District Posts and highlighted their current membership. He congratulated the Posts who were at or very near 100% and encouraged all Legionnaires to continue to work hard in this area.
8. Numerous candidates for Department Offices were introduced throughout the day and spoke about their qualifications for office.
9. District Officer Reports:

- a. Commander Fregien gave a short address about the status of the 8th District and reported on his activities during the past six months.
 - b. 1st Vice Commander Balz spoke about her activities during the past six months.
 - c. 2nd Vice Commander Wikersheim was unable to attend the Conference.
 - d. 3rd Vice Commander Burt spoke about his activities since his appointment earlier this year.
 - e. Finance Officer Jensen gave a report on the status of 8th District finances. He asked the Sergeant-at-Arms to pass the container for the Shell Fund. A motion was made to accept the finance report. The motion was seconded and passed.
 - f. Adjutant Herminath requested that all Counties and Posts inform the Department and 8th District of all officer election results, including non-change reports, for 2018-19. He thanked the Legionnaires for their support to the 8th District website during the past year, particularly their timely updates related to Post and personnel information changes.
 - g. Chaplain Theama reported on his activities during the past six months. He said that his work situation makes it very difficult for him to carry out his duties as 8th District Chaplain. He said he would not resign at this time but added that he would be appreciative if a Legionnaire would volunteer to replace him as 8th District Chaplain.
 - h. Historian Pope reported on his activities during the past six months.
 - i. Sergeant-at-Arms Young reported on his activities during the past six months. He also spoke on his activities as Department Representative to King Veterans Home.
10. County Commander Reports
- a. Marathon County Commander Balz gave a lengthy report on Post activities during the past six months.
 - b. Portage County Commander Miller gave a lengthy report on Post activities during the past six months.
 - c. Shawano-Menomonee County Commander Marien gave a lengthy report on Post activities during the past six months.
 - d. Waupaca County Commander Pope gave a lengthy report on Post activities during the past six months.
 - e. Waushara County Commander Wickersheim was excused, no report.
 - f. Wood County Commander Krofta gave a lengthy report on Post activities during the past six months.
11. District Committee Chairman Reports:
- a. Americanism Jerry Krofta
No report.
 - b. Badger Legionnaire/Public Relations
No report.
 - c. Camp American Legion Mike Burk
He reported on recent construction and upgrade work carried out at Camp American Legion. He stressed that many upgrades were accomplished in the

ladies living quarters. In response to a question, he confirmed that volunteers were always needed to work on ongoing projects.

d. Children and Youth Ron Fregien

No report.

e. Convention Activity Arien Herminath

Arien spoke about preparations for the upcoming Department Convention in Oshkosh. He also spoke about opportunities to sign up to serve on DEC Committees during the coming year. Finally, he gave an overview of arrangements for the upcoming National Convention in Minneapolis and encouraged Legionnaires to attend the event and sign up to serve as an 8th District Delegate or National Assistance Sergeant at Arms. Commander Fregien added that each Post should have at least one delegate attend the Department Convention in order to pick up their Post's information packet. He encouraged the Legionnaires who plan to stay overnight in Oshkosh to reserve their hotel rooms early.

f. Finance No report

g. Fund Raising No report

h. Homeless Vets No report

i. Hospital Gary Mader

Commander Fregien read the text of a prestigious award given to Gary by King Veterans Home for his many hours of volunteer activity there over the years. Gary was given a round of applause for his service. He then gave a report on recent activities at the Veterans Home at King and read a brief bio of the new Commander.

12. Commander Fregien adjourned the conference for lunch.

13. After lunch, Commander Fregien introduced Mark Melton, our main speaker and Commander of Post 226, Manawa who spoke about what we as active Legionnaires can and should do to promote and grow American Legion programs and activities for future generations.

14. Commander Fregien then called for a continuation of the District Chairman reports:

j. King Day Pilgrimage Jean Balz

Jean reminded the Legionnaires to attend the event and pick up their Post membership information for the coming year.

k. Legion Riders Ron Fregien for Ray McSherry

He reported that a Wisconsin Legacy Ride would not take place this year. If Posts would like to donate to the National Legacy Ride, the Legion Riders will accept donations and pass the money on.

l. Legislative Jim Reigel

No report.

j. Policy and Resolutions Jim Reigel

Jim reported on four resolutions that will be presented at the Department Convention in Oshkosh. The first resolution has to do with the sale of Post property and is a rewrite of a resolution presented at last year's Department Convention. The resolution defines the procedures to be followed in the sale or mortgage of Post assets. The second resolution has to do with a new

program of the American Legion, the Wisconsin American Legion Law Enforcement Career Academy. This new program will have a representative on the Department Americanism Committee. The third resolution has to do with a requirement for Legionnaires who handle money to be covered by Fidelity Crime Insurance equal to the amount of Legion money regularly entrusted to them. The Fourth resolution has to do with the evaluation of the Department Adjutant. This is a rewrite of the Department Adjutant's duties. Following a discussion of the resolutions, a motion was made and seconded to have the 8th District Caucus attendees vote to support or oppose the above resolutions while in session at the 2018 Department Convention in Oshkosh.

k. Membership

Ron Fregien

He listed the 100% posts and the posts lacking one or two members to reach that goal. He encouraged all posts to continue their hard work to reach out to all delinquent members and encourage them to pay their dues.

l. POW/MIA

Jim Young

No Report.

m. National Security

Jim Young

Jim summarized the activity of the last National Security Committee meeting.

n. Religious Emphasis

Tom Theama

Pastor Theama reported that Mark Milton had volunteered to take over the duties of 8th District Chaplain.

o. VA&R

Dan Rindt

No report.

15. Commander Fregien introduced Daniel Zimmerman, Director of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Zimmerman thanked everyone present for their support of our Veterans Homes here in Wisconsin and stressed that the VA could not carry out its work without our volunteer time and financial assistance. He spoke about Wisconsin DVA efforts to promote veteran retirements in Wisconsin. This, he added, will assist our VSOs to identify and sign up the younger veterans that are essential to our future growth. He also spoke about homeless veterans in Wisconsin and said he wanted to provide a facility for homeless veterans at King once the construction there is completed in three years. He added that he also wanted to provide a wing for female veterans at King at that time. He is also working to provide homeless veteran program upgrades at Union Grove and Chippawa Falls that would support single occupancy and enable veterans to rent a room for \$150 a month after completing the program. He is looking to provide the same program in our area as well. His focus is to ensure that plans are in place to meet any contingency and avoid setback in the future. He has committed considerable funds to improve the homeless veteran program here in Wisconsin and has taken personal responsibility to ensure its success. Nevertheless, the homeless veteran problem will not be resolved this year. In response to a question, Mr. Zimmerman stated that Foxconn jobs in Wisconsin would support veterans. For example, of the 13,000 jobs that will be created 3,000 would be earmarked for veterans. This was built into the State's tax incentive legislation, but it is also supported by Foxconn.

In response to another question, Mr. Zimmerman said a number of our homeless veterans were struggling with mental and physical disabilities and were unemployable. The VA is working to provide our homeless veterans with the mental and physical support they need to overcome their disabilities and successfully enter the workforce. Mr. Zimmerman also spoke about grant applications for federal funds to support ongoing homeless veteran programs at our three facilities. He assured the Legionnaires that regardless of the outcome of pending WDVA federal grant applications, the homeless veteran programs at these facilities will not be shut down. Mr. Zimmerman stressed that the CVSO program here in Wisconsin is essential to the work of his department. He described the VSO program as the tip of the spear of VA work in the state and said it would not be consolidated into one central location. He would like to see a CVSO in every County and is working to get the State grant for this service increased. Mr. Zimmerman congratulated King resident Gary Mader, who was present, for his volunteer service. He recognized Gary at a program last year for having donated 14,000 volunteer hours at King Veterans Home, a total that is now up to 16,864 volunteer hours.

16. Commander Fregien introduced Department of Wisconsin Commander Laurel Clewell who spoke about her travels during the past year. She advised the Vietnam veterans present to check out the website va.com to learn about a recently-identified parasite that could be life threatening. She added that veterans had to reach out to the VA to learn more about this parasite. She spoke about membership and commented that the Department was within 538 members of reaching 100%. She encouraged the Legionnaires to use the website MyLegion.org because as of this coming Monday it will be able to process membership actions. Posts will be able to send in multiple renewal and new member information and have the funds withdrawn directly from the Post checkbook. This will speed up the processing time for membership actions and simplify the transfer of dues to Department. Commander Clewell was asked if she supported the first resolution, see para. 11. e. above, regarding the sale or mortgage of Post property. She commented that, in her opinion, the rules and regulations for the sale or mortgage of Post property should be defined in the Post Bylaws rather than legislated by Department. She also encouraged all Posts to keep their bylaws current and provide Department with a copy.

17. District Program Director Reports:

a. Americanism and Government Testing Arien Herminath
Arien spoke about the 50-question test offered online in April of this year. The test awards \$11,400 in scholarship money to 45 high school students and is an important program that deserves to be promoted. Historically, the 8th District has been over represented in this program and had 338 student participants this year.

b. Badger Boys State Jean Balz
She reported on last year's activities and encouraged all Posts to support this year's program. She stressed that home schooled students are welcome to

attend and encouraged Legionnaires to promote the program to their local home school groups.

c. Baseball

Jim Young

Jim spoke about the recent activities of the Baseball Committee. Background checks for volunteers are still required. He gave a general overview of rule changes for this year's schedule, and stressed that most changes were in the areas of improved health and safety of the players.

d. Blood Doner

No Report

e. County Youth Government

Arien Herminath

He reported on the 2018 Waupaca County Youth Government program scheduled to be held on 26 April of this year. He invited all interested Legionnaires to attend and learn about the Youth Government Day program.

f. Oratorical

Jerry Krofta

The 8th District offers scholarship money for the top three contestants each year. Last year the District did not have any candidates and the Posts were encouraged to promote the Oratorical Program at their local high schools.

g. SAL

Dan Rindt

Dan reported that the three SAL Squadrons in the 8th District achieved 100% membership this past year.

18. Old Business:

None.

19. New business:

a. A motion was made and seconded to approve the purchase of a new 8th District Flag. The old flag was brought forward for review and it was agreed that the flag should be replaced. The motion passed.

b. Mark Melton, the new 8th District Chaplain, was installed.

c. Legionnaires John Zychowicz, David Jensen, and Jean Balz volunteered to serve as Ballot Clerks at the Department Convention. Jim Young volunteered to serve as an Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms at the Department Convention.

d. Commander Fregien asked for volunteers to attend standing committee meetings at the Department Convention. Legionnaire Krofta volunteered to attend the Americanism meeting; Legionnaire Fregien volunteered to attend the C&Y meeting; Legionnaire Pope volunteered to attend the Finance meeting; Legionnaire Gorst volunteered to attend the Legislative meeting; Legionnaire Herminath volunteered to attend the Membership meeting; Legionnaire Bohr volunteered to attend the National Security meeting; Legionnaire Wichersheim volunteered to attend the Resolutions meeting; and Legionnaire Rindt volunteered to attend the Veterans Affairs meeting.

e. Legionnaires Kathy Gorst, Jim Reigel, Ron Fregien, Mathew Harn, Jim Young, Bob Bohr, and Russ Wohlrahe volunteered to serve as 8th District Delegates at the upcoming National Convention in Minneapolis. Arien Herminath volunteered to serve as Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms at National.

f. Bob Bohr expressed his interest in serving on the Department National Security Committee. The requisite form was completed and forwarded to Department for consideration.

- g. Commander Fregien mentioned that the 8th District Fall Conference will be hosted by Post 63, Clintonville on 27 October. Details are on the 8th District website, wilegion8.org.
20. Chaplain Tom Theama led the membership in memorial service. He called the County Commanders forward and had them read the names of the Legionnaires who passed away during the past year. Chaplain Theama asked for a moment of silence for our departed comrades and gave a closing prayer.
 21. There being no further business to come before the conference, Commander Young closed the meeting per protocol and declared the 2018 8th District Spring Conference adjourned at 1430 hours.

Respectfully submitted,
Arien Herminath
8th District Adjutant