



**American Legion Post 543
General Membership Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 25 , 2025**

Meeting Minutes

- 1. The meeting was called to Order at 7:00 PM –Commander Carton**
- 2. The Commander ordered the advancement of the Colors and a hand salute.**
- 3. The Commander ordered Opening Prayer – Chaplain Templeman.**
- 4. The Commander recognized the POWs and those Missing in Action, as well as honored them by referring to the empty chair.**
- 5. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Commander with audience participation.**
- 6. The Commander led the Members in reciting the Preamble to the American Legion Constitution.**
- 7. The Commander reviewed the four pillars and how the Post supports over 70 programs.**
- 8. The Commander inquired of the meeting attendees if there were any other Vietnam era Veterans in the audience who had not received their 50th Anniversary commemorative pin and certificate for their service. There were none.**
- 9. The Commander asked if there were any Veterans visiting the Post for the first time. The Commander welcomed the Guests and asked them to introduce themselves. The Commander then welcomed Guest Rodney Faughn USA.**

10. The Commander then called Post Service Officer Steve Muir to the Podium to introduce our guest for this General Membership Meeting, Mr. Randy Maudlin, General Manager at Southport Lowes Home Improvement. The Commander presented Mr. Maudlin with a Post 543 Recognition Plaque as our Business of the Quarter. Mr. Maudlin thanked the Post Membership and provided his plans to continue the support his company has provided American Legion Post 543

11. The Commander took a Roll Call of Officers.

Officers Absent were:

Doc Liberty, (Judge Advocate/Parliamentarian)

Phillip McGhee, (1st Vice Commander)

Chuck Francka, (Historian)

12. The Commander announced that there was a Quorum in Attendance.

13. The Commander requested the Chaplain brief the Membership regarding any sick call Members:

The Chaplain requested the Membership to remember Mark Lieberman and Gene Stack in their prayers.

14. The Commander requested a motion be made to approve January 28, 2026, General Membership Meeting Minutes. *A motion by Post Member Steve Muir and Seconded by Dan Bennet was made to approve January 28, 2026, General Membership Meeting Minutes No discussion was required. The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous. –Commander.*

15. The Commander advised General Membership that in Accordance with the Post-Laws of the Richard H. Stewart, Jr. Post 543 Article IV, Section 7 Special Elections. We have 1 Nomination for the Post 543 Finance Officer, Post Member Rick Haley, and that there is an Uncontested Election for the Finance Officer Position, that he would ask the Post Adjutant to cast one Vote by Acclamation. The Commander then asked for a Motion to approve Rick Haley as the Post 543 Finance Officer. The Motion was made by Service Officer, Steve Muir and seconded by Active-Duty Support Chair Dan Bennett. The voice Vote was Unanimous. Motion Carried

16. The Commander called on Post 543 Finance Officer Report – Rick Haley

The Finance Officer provided the Membership with the current view of accounts by type and use of each of the various line items. (Attachment “A”). The Finance Officer Stated that \$72,253 has been spent on the Budgeted \$79,257 or 40%

The Commander requested a motion be made to approve February 25,2026, Finance Report. A motion by Post Member Dan Bennett and Seconded by Post Member Aaron Largent was made to approve February 25, 2026, Finance Report. No discussion was required. The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.

17. Post543 Past Commander, Steve Ratti provided the Membership with a short overview of the SJMAD Fund Raiser scheduled for August 8, 2026. He advised that an undertaking of this magnitude requires many volunteers to be successful.

18. The Commander invited Gary Purcell (2nd Vice Commander, Membership) to the podium to provide the Membership with an update.

The 2nd vice Commander, Membership, that the number of total paid members to date is 243.

The 2nd vice Commander, Membership, reminded the Membership that the 2026 Goal is 269 Members, and that we are at 95% of our FY26 Goal. May 11th is the last day that we can achieve our 100% Membership Goal.

The 2nd Vice Commander Membership requested that the Membership Verify that their contact information was correct as listed on the Post 543 Membership Roster.

19. The Commander invited Steve Muir (Post 543 Resource Officer) to give an update on the current active cases being worked on in addition to an Update on American Legion State and National policies.

The Post Service Officer provided updates from the Department conference, the Legion VSO being moved to the Department HQ.

2nd Amendment rights issue when Veterans are determined to be incompetent to handle their financial affairs.

In recent VA Publishing of notice to consider treatment/medication when evaluating disability claims had been halted by VA Secretary Collens. This action was formally rescinded due to the backlash by Veterans throughout our nation.

20. The Commander invited the 2nd Vice Commander Active-Duty Support, Dan Bennett, to the Podium to update the Membership on the Active-Duty Support update.

The 2nd Vice Commander updated the membership on the progress of the SBHS JROTC Drone Team Competitions. The 2nd Vice Commander also advised the Membership of the success of JROTC Cadet Justin Stevenson, Department Cadet of the Year at the Department Marksmanship competition in which he placed 5th among NC Legion Posts competitors. The 2nd Vice Commander with Active Duty Committee Member Bob Davis provided Valentines to the USCG Station, Oak Island.

21. The Commander called on Post 543 The Sergeant-at-Arms/House & Entertainment Report – Rick Sessa

Sergeant-at-Arms Rick Sessa thanked the Post Members which were instrumental in supporting the January Charter Dinner and the Oratorical Contest which were hosted by Post 543

Sergeant-at-Arms Rick Sessa and the House and Entertainment team have arranged a Bus Trip to Ft. Bragg on March 4, 2026. Sergeant at Arms Sessa provided the Membership with a detailed agenda of times for the upcoming Bus Tour of Ft. Bragg.

22. The Commander called Deputy Vice Commander Americanism Chuck Blackburn to the podium. Deputy Vice Commander Blackburn provided the status of the Adopt A Classroom Program with SBMS. A listing of classes was provided and a request for volunteers to help in developing the training courses was provided and a request for volunteers to help in developing the training courses

23. The Commander asked for an update on the Saint James Veteran Memorial and Brick Sales.

Tom Picinich informed the Membership of the current Brick sales and the installment of Committee Members Tom McAndrews and Dave Vickers to the committee. These Post members will join with George Freeman and Tom Picinich. Member Dave Vickers will be the Committee Chair

24. The Commander asked for Additional Officer or Committee Comments.

Post Member Kathy Roth provided a brief update on the Women Veterans Healthcare Summit scheduled in June and will provide more details in coming Membership Meetings.

25. The Commander provided a current list of Post 543 Policies which were recently updated and presented for the Post review at the start of the General Meeting. The updating of these documents was required by the change in the NC State Tax Form 990.

The Commander then requested a motion be made to approve updated Post Policies. *A motion by Post Member Rick Sessa and Seconded by Rob McKinley was made to approve updated Post Policies. No discussion was required. The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.*

26. The Commander requested the Chaplain to provide the General Membership Meeting Closing Prayer – Chaplain Templeman

27. The Commander requested the Colors be retired -Michael R. Carton
The Post 543 Color Guard Retired the Colors.

28. The General Membership Meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM. – Commander Carton

Douglas Pratt

Douglas Pratt

Adjutant

Michael R. Carton

Michael R. Carton

Commander

Attachement A



RICHARD H. STEWART JR. AMERICAN LEGION POST 543 Financial Report as of 25 February 2026

NC
Post
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PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

BUDGET CATEGORY	FY 2026 MEMBERSHIP REPORTING	Income		Expenses		% Executed
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	
1.0	VETERAN SERVICES	\$4,800	\$3,835	\$ 23,890	\$10,963	46
2.0	VETERAN SUPPORT			\$8,050	\$4,644	58
3.0	DEFENSE			\$12,850	\$9,179	71
4.0	AMERICANISM			\$1,400	\$250	18
5.0	YOUTH	\$1000		\$6,800	\$6,022	89
6.0	HONORS & CEREMONIES			\$5,400	\$1,271	24
7.0	POST OPERATIONS			\$23,434	\$13,381	57
8.0	POST FINANCE	\$12,209	\$10,122	\$10,225	\$5,467	54
9.0	Not applicable					
10.0	VETERAN MEMORIAL	\$3,000	\$1,150	\$2,400	\$325	14
11.0	RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	\$140,448	\$78,490	\$50,658	0*	
12.0	POST SCHOLARSHIPS	\$17,800	\$7,350	\$34,150	\$20,750	60
	GRAND TOTAL	\$179,257	\$100,947	\$179,257	\$72,253	40

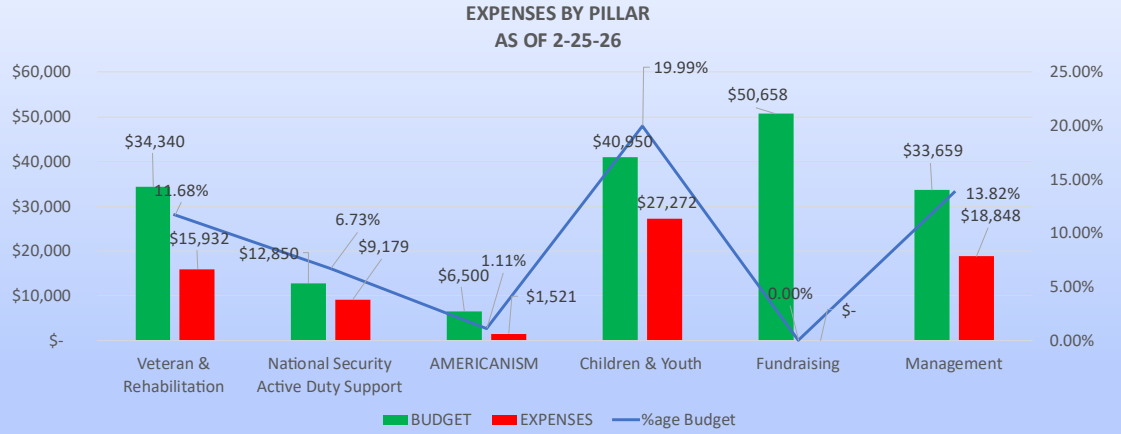
PROPRIETARY INFORMATION



RICHARD H. STEWART JR. AMERICAN LEGION POST 543 Expenses by Pillar

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PROPRIETARY INFORMATION



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