



**American Legion Post 543
General Membership Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 24, 2026**

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 Bruce 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 Tom Christopher Holmes USA.
10. The Commander took a Roll Call of Officers.

Officers Absent were:

Chuck Francka- Historian

Gary Purcel- 2nd Vice Commander, Membership

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

12. The Commander Called Post Deputy Vice Commander, Americanism Chuck Blackburn to the Podium where he was presented with the 2026 Post 543 Legionnaire of the Year Plaque.

13. The Commander Called Post 543 Public Relations Officer, Jim McCriskin, to the Podium where he was recognized for his outstanding service and performance at the Coast Guard Academy Clinic from 2021-2025.

14. The Commander announced that the Initiation of new Post Members would take place. The Post Adjutant called 2nd Vice-Commander Membership Teresa Brookover to the Podium and provide the Adjutant with the list of Post Members that were present to receive their “Initiation to Post 543”. Post Members, James Brody, Rodney Faughn and David King participated in the “American Legion Initiation Pledge” and received their “One Year” Pin.

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

- Chaplain Templeman requested Post Membership to remember Mark Lieberman, George Cassel and Doc Liberty in their Prayers.

16. The Commander requested a motion be made to approve May 27, 2026, General Membership Meeting Minutes. *A motion by Post Member Steve Muir and Seconded by Active-Duty Support Chair, Dan Bennett, was made to approve May 27, 2026, General Membership Meeting Minutes* No discussion was required. *The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.*

17. 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 \$112,575 has been spent on the Budgeted \$179,257 or 63%.

The Commander requested a motion be made to approve May 27, 2026, Finance Report. *A motion by Sergeant at Arms, Rick Sessa and Seconded by 1st Vice Commander Phillip McGhee, was made to approve June 24, 2026, Finance Report.* No discussion was required. *The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.*

The Commander requested a motion be made to approve Fiscal Year 27, Post 543 Budget. After a few questions were answered by the Post Finance Officer regarding the FY27 Budget, *a motion by Sergeant at Arms, Rick Sessa and Seconded by 1st Service Officer Steve Muir, was made to approve Post 543 FY27 Budget.* The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.

18. The Commander invited Teresa Brookover, (Membership Team Member) to the podium to provide the Membership with an update on the current Membership 2025-2026 Membership Goal.

- Teresa Brookover reported that the number of total paid members to date is 274. This number exceeded our 2025-2026 Membership Goal by 5 new members thereby exceeding the Department Goal and the Post achieving 100%.

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

- The Service Officer Provided a positive update on the 2026 VEAC Results, with Post Members receiving positive results on the review of their current medical benefits
- The Service Officer also reported on the “US Legislation currently reviewing the HR 9237 Bill. This Bill was made up of 62 bipartisan bills ear

marked to provide additional benefits to Veterans. The Service Officer suggested that there could be additional negative issues included in the House of Representatives Bill.

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

- Sergeant-at-Arms Rick Sessa thanked the Post Membership and Executive Committees for their support to him. Rick Sessa is the Founding Father of the Post.

21. The Commander called on Post 543 Adjutant to the Podium to provide a report.

- Adjutant Doug Pratt discussed the American Legion Department of North Carolina Rifle Raffle. The Department Raffle is a “D-Day Commemorative Thompson .45 ACP Rifle” with an estimated value of \$3,000. The Adjutant advised the membership that Raffle Tickets for the Rifle will be available to members after the General Membership Meeting.

22. The Commander asked for the Committee Chair of Honors & Ceremonies Report

Honor Guard Aaron Largent provided a Slide for the upcoming Events. Those events included:

- June 26 July 4th Festival Grand Opening
- June 27th the Tennis Round Robin in support of the SJMAD Fund Raising activities.
- June 27,28 Sea Notes Patriotic Concert
- July 2, Loggerhead Game Opening with Color Guard
- July 4th Festival Parade

23. The Commander asked for Additional Officer or Committee Reports.

- Past Commander Steve Ratti provided the Post Membership That St. James Military Appreciation Day Golf Tournament scheduled for August 8th with registration to play on Wednesday July 1, 2026. There will be 3 Divisions this year (Men, Women & Mixed). The Business Solicitations will be cut off on July 10, 2026. Past Commandeer Ratti reminded the Post Membership that Volunteer Positions are needed to make this event successful. Please help us Support our Post.

24. The Commander asked for Membership Comments

- There were none

25. The Commander provided the Post Membership of the upcoming Events

The list of Upcoming Events discussed was:

- Newly installed Executive Committee Officers Oath 6/24/26
- NC Department of the American Legion Convention 6/11-6/13
- Sea Notes Patriotic Concert OWA 6/27 & 6/28

26. The Commander asked District 9 Commander George Freeman to Commence the Swearing in of the FY27 Post 543 Executive Committee Members. Commander Freeman presented Commander Carton with the 100% Membership Award Certificate and Battle Ribbon prior to executing the Swearing In incoming Executive Members.

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

- Chaplain Templeman provided the Closing Prayer

28. The Commander requested the Colors be retired -Michael R. Carton

The Post 543 Color Guard Retired the Colors.

**29. The General Membership Meeting was adjourned at 8:41 PM. – Commander
Carton**

Douglas Pratt

Douglas Pratt

Adjutant

Michael R Carton

Michael R. Carton

Commander