American Legion Post 543
General Membership Meeting
Minutes Wednesday, July 22, 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 – Temp Chaplain Tom Bednarczyk**
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 was one veteran.
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 presented a pin and certificate.
10. **The Commander called Post Member Aaron Largent to the podium** to Receive the Post 543 Legionnaire of the Year Recognition Plaque for his 2025 and 2026 Support both as the 2025 Post Adjutant and 2026 to his support as the JROTC and CAP Liaison Officer.

11. **The Commander called Post Member Steve Muir to the podium. Steve related to the Membership the outstanding support that the Solstice Builders provided to Post Member John Fryar (WWII, Korea War Veteran) in the efforts to update and repair John Fryar's home to make it safe for a wheelchair bound Veteran. Solstice Builders Owner, Mr. Cliff Pender and his entire office Staff received a standing ovation for their support and received the Post 543 Business of the Quarter Plaque.**

12. **The Commander took a Roll Call of Officers.**

    Officers Absent were:

    Post Adjutant- Kathy Roth

    Post Finance Officer- Rick Haley

    Deputy Vice-Commander- Chuck Blackburn

13. **The Commander announced that there was a Quorum in Attendance.**

14. **The Commander requested the** Chaplain Bednarczyk **to brief the Membership regarding any sick call Members:**

    - The Chaplain Bednarczyk advised that there were no Post Members on the Sick Call List.

15. **The Commander requested a motion be made to approve June 24, 2026, General Membership Meeting Minutes*. A motion by Post Member Steve Muir and Post Member Aaron Largent, was made to approve June 24, 2026, General Membership Meeting Minutes*** **No discussion was required.**

    The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.

16. **The Commander provided the July 22, 2026, Post 543 Finance Officer Report –**

    - The Commanding 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 report reflects we are at ~4.9% of our income targets and we are $767.00 spent or less that 1% of the budgeted amount..

The Commander requested a motion be made to approve July 22, 2026, Finance Report. ***A motion by Post Member, Aaron Rogers and Post Member Dan Bennett, was made to approve July 22, 2026, Finance Report.*** **No discussion was required.** ***The motion carried, and the voice vote was unanimous.***

17. **The Commander invited the Post 543 Past Commander and St. James Military Appreciation Day Committee Chair Steve Ratti, to provide an update to the Post 543 Primary Fund Raiser. Past Commander Ratti informed the Membership of the status of the SJMAD Tennis Tournament and the SJMAD Golf Tournament. Past Commander Ratti advised the Post Membership of the wonderful job that District Commander, George Freeman and Honor Guard Chair Bill Morgan have done in raising funds in their specific assigned areas.**

18. **The Commander invited Teresa Brookover, (Membership Team Chair) to the podium to provide the Membership with an update on the current Membership 2026-2027 Membership Goal.**

    - Teresa Brookover reported that the number of total paid members to date is 84 or ~ 30% of our goal. She advised Post Membership of the many ways in which the yearly dues can be submitted to the Post. She advised the Membership that the 50% of the Post Membership Goal (Cardinal Award) is by September 10, 2026.

19. **The Commander invited the Active-Duty Support Officer David Vickers to Report on the status of the A-D Committee.**
    - The Active-Duty Support Chair responded that there was nothing significant to report on.

20. **The Commander invited Jim Williams (Post 543 Resource Officer) to give an update on the current active cases being worked.**
    - The Resource Officer Provided an update of current Veteran Cases being worked on. Many of the cases under review were of "Homeless Veterans" needing help finding shelter. The Post Resource Officer explained the actions to be taken to resolve these issues.

- The Resource Officer also reported on the "US House of Representatives Bill HR 6585 on National Disaster Act.
- The Resource Officer expounded on the positive results from attending American Legion College

21. The Commander Called on Gina Richards-McCloskey, Post 543 Parliamentarian Report

- The Parliamentarian responded that there was nothing significant to report on.

22. The Commander Called Post 543 Temp. Chaplain Tom Bednarzcyk to provide the Chaplain's Report.

- The Temporary Chaplain reported that the 2 key Teams that make up the Chaplain's efforts has declined in membership and that both teams are at 50% strength. The Temporary Chaplain asked the Post Membership for volunteers to help fill these positions.

23. The Commander Called on Jim McCriskin, Post 543 Public Relations Report

- The Public Relations Officer responded that there was nothing significant to report on.

24. The Commander Called on Chuck Francka, Post 543 Historian Report

- The Historian responded that there was nothing significant to report on.

25. The Commander Called on David Vickers to provide the SJ Memorial & Brick Sales Committee Report

- Tom Picinic provided Membership with an update on Brick Sales to take place during the months of August and September.
- This report was followed by David Vickers with an update on the status of the "Find A Brick" program to be installed at the Veteran's Memorial outside of the Town of St. James Offices.

26. The Commander Called on Steve Muir to provide an update on the Veteran Legislation Committee.

- Post Member Muir provided the current status of the Take Care of America's Veteran's Act (TCAVA). Post Member Muir indicated that more than 32,000 emails have been sent to Congress and that is just the beginning of the American Legion Support to this important piece of Legislation.
- The American Legion Advocacy Grass Roots Action Center utilizing the QR Code was demonstrated.

27. The Commander Called on Bill Morgan to provide an update on the Honors and Ceremonies Committee

- The Committee Chair provided an update to the Membership of the activities that the Honor Guard were called on in the month of July. Including the Southport Flag Lowering and support to the SJMAD activities.

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

- 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.

29. The Commander Provided and update to Post 543 Upcoming Events

Those events included:

- July 19-July 25th Post Honor Guard supporting the Sisters of Southport and Southport Police Department Flag Lowering.
- August 4th USCG 236 Anniversary
- August 13-18th American Legion World Series.
- August 21 Operation Vet Smile, Supply NC
- Sept. 24th Vet Expo, Independence Mall, Wilmington NC.

30. The Commander asked for Membership Comments

- There were none

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

- Chaplain Bednarczyk provided the Closing Prayer

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

The Post 543 Color Guard Retired the Colors.

33. The General Membership Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM. – Commander Carton

Kathleen K. Roth

Dr. Katheen K. Roth
Adjutant

Michael R Carton

Michael R. Carton
Commander