The Fall Trustees Meeting of American Legion Buckeye Boys State was called to order by President David Ridenour at 10:00 am, at the American Legion Department of Ohio Headquarters, Delaware, Ohio, with a Salute to the Colors, Pledge of Allegiance led by 2nd Vice President Steve Masowick and Invocation by 1st Vice President Melissa Fowle.

**Trustees Present**: President David Ridenour, 1st Vice President Melissa Fowle, 2nd Vice President Steve Masowick, Secretary Mark Weldon, Director James Koppin, Bart Arndt, Dennis Asselage, Darell Bishop, Gary Cox, Jr., Richard Gallaher, Malcolm Glasgow, Jim Hoessle, William Hoff, Terry Kaufman, Charles Kvochick, Kevin Motter, Steven Peltier, William Pennell, Robert Schmitt, Richard Schuck, James Starr, Bruce Tolle, Gerald White, Douglas Whitney, Paul Wiehe, Nathan Winkleman and Richard Zulch.

**Commissioners Present**: Robert Clark, Steven Ervin, Brian Fowle, Andrew Klingler, John Life, Dennis Morrison, Frank Navarre, Stan Oren, Jean Wilson.

**Consultants Present**: Evan Anderson, Matt Brown, Eric Bucher, Richard Ching, Timothy Conway, Todd Gerber, Grant Grace, Thayne Gray, Jeff Jordan, Mike Leone, Luther Liggett Jr., Scott Palider, Nick Selvaggio, James Sforza, Jesse Thomas, Jon Turney, Dan Willis.

**Staff:** Christie White

**Guests**: Dennis Antonino Post 281, Josh Brown, Holden Bryan, David Gordon Post 281, Scott Hunter, Judy Johnson Post 217, Sgt. Jeff Kaess-OSP, Michael Kemerer, LTC. Josh Swindell-OSP, Roy Terry,

**Staff that joined Post Everlasting** **Director Koppin**

Director James Koppin read the names of those staff members who passed away since our last meeting:

Bill Strong, Trustee

Brad Teis, Commissioner and Department Commander

Robert Ray, Trustee

**Reading of minutes from the annual meeting: June 16, 2022** **Mark Weldon**

Steve Peltier moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes as copies were distributed to all present. Bill Pennell seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

**Ohio State Highway Patrol** **OSHP**

Lt. Colonel Josh Swindell, who is second in command of the Ohio State Highway Patrol, announced that the Patrol is going to increase the number of Troopers assigned to the program from three to five. He and the rest of the command staff believe it is important that more of their personnel have the opportunity to be exposed to, and participate in, the program. He also said that other OSP visitors, such as the K-9 and aviation units will spend more time when they come to the program.

In addition, OSP troopers will be actively trying to identify and recruit high school students for the program when they’re in schools doing the “Five Minutes for Life” training. He is also planning to challenge local Sheriff and police departments to do the same.

**Personnel Report**  **2nd Vice President Masowick**

1. Trustee Resignations

None

1. Trustee Recommendations

The Executive committee has recommended that the following Commissioners be moved up to Trustee, assigned to the group shown:

1. Jean Wilson, 2025 group
2. Dennis Morrison, 2025 group
3. Brian Fowle, 2023 group

Gary Cox Jr. moved to approve the Trustee appointments. Jim Hoessle seconded the

motion. **MOTION PASSED**

1. Commissioner Applications
2. Kenneth Parsons, Elyria post 188

Executive committee has recommended accepting the application pending

attendance at the 2023 program, and assigning Kenneth to Elections and the

Court section.

Dick Zulch moved to accept the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Gary Cox, Jr. seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

1. Joshua Brown

Joshua attended the 2022 program and worked in the Court section. The Executive Committee has recommended final approval.

Bill Pennell moved to fully accept the application as Commissioner. Dick Zulch

seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

1. Frank Barnes, Alliance Post 166

This application was tabled due to lack of a staff signature. Mark Weldon will meet with him.

1. Bryan Holder

Executive Committee recommends acceptance pending attendance at the 2023 program, and assigning Bryan to the Recreation section.

Melissa Fowle moved to accept the recommendation. Richard Schuck seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

1. Judy Johnson

Steve Peltier moved to accept the application, pending attendance at the 2023 program, and assigning Judy to County Government. Paul Wiehe seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

1. 2022 Program Attendance Evaluations

Did not attend: Shawn Cook, Conner Evans, Frank Morrow, Jason Pennell

Attended:

1. Al Buxton-Commissioner

The Executive Committee recommends full acceptance of Al Buxton for position of Commissioner.

Jean Wilson moved to accept Al Buxton as a Commissioner. Gary Cox, Jr.,

seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

1. Roy Terry- Commissioner

The Executive Committee recommends full acceptance of Roy Terry for position of Commissioner.

Gary Cox, Jr., moved to accept Roy Terry as a Commissioner. Bart Arndt

seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

1. Douglas Hancock- Consultant

Doug submitted his application after attending the program. Application was

tabled for lack of proper signatures

1. Michael Kemerer- Consultant

The Executive Committee recommends full acceptance of Michael Kemerer for position of Consultant.

Bill Pennell moved to accept Michael Kemerer as a Consultant. Charles

Kovachick seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

**Appointment of Samsung Scholarship Committee** **President Ridenour**

A. Mike Leone

B. Ron Chapman- Chairman

C. Steve Scherer

Richard Zulch moved to approve the committee as submitted. Bill Pennell seconded

the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

11. Appointment of Hall of Fame Committee **President Ridenour**

A. Darell Bishop- Chairman

B. John Looker

Gary Cox, Jr., moved to approve the committee as submitted. Jim Hoessle seconded

the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

12. Appointment of Boys Nation Selection Committee President Ridenour

A. Dave Ridenour, Chairman

B. John Turney

C. Mark Weldon

D. Dan Favreau

E. Nate Winkleman

Paul Wiehe moved to approve the committee as submitted. Richard Schuck seconded

the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

**Dates for 2023 Boys State** **Director Koppin**

A. April 14th&15th, 2023- Spring Meeting

B. June 11th-18th, 2023- 2023 Program

**Director’s Report** **Director Koppin**

A. Establish 2023 enrollment fee

Gary Cox, Jr., moved to keep the enrollment fee at $300.00. Bill Pennell seconded

the motion.  **MOTION PASSED**

B. Todd Gerber presentation

Todd reported that last year delegates were sent seven emails prior to the program start. These covered information such as packing lists, orientations, emergency medical forms, etc. We know that delegates and parents aren’t retaining the information presented in orientations due to feedback from responses to these emails.

Counseling staff reached out to attendees from the past three years asking them for recommendations of potential delegates that we could reach out to, and set up a process for those interested to respond. We got some results from this, but didn’t start until late April, which is very late in the process.

We reached out to teachers & administrators at about the same time, from a list generated by Brock Kinser. They were given the same response link as the prior delegates. This got a small response, and some feedback that this was too late in the school year to reach potential students.

Todd and Steve Scherer conducted seven on-line orientations, two of which were done after the delegates arrived on campus. This allowed for identifying those who didn’t attend an orientation after enrolling in the program.

Todd identified the issues with in-person orientations as timing of the orientations (too many already over by the time some applications are submitted), time and distance some delegates have to travel to attend and consistency of content.

Todd’s discussion thoughts:

-All orientations should be on-line

- Orientations should start in mid-May

- Continue the pre-program emails

- Hold pre-program meet and greets for delegates at the Post or District level to keep the

personal contact lost by doing orientations on-line

C. Lt. Col. Josh Swindell & Christie White—joint recruitment effort

Christie led off by mentioning that letters will be going to Post chairmen and others explaining the joint recruitment effort announced by Lt. Col. Swindell earlier in the morning. A copy of the letter is in the packets. Lt. Col. Swindell expanded a little bit on what the Patrol is doing, including preparation of a couple of videos to inform both Patrol employees and students.

The second item that dovetails with this is the creation of two QR codes, which have been handed out to everyone. These were created to be a simple and cost effective way to get information and promotional material about the program into the hands of those who need it. The codes will take you to a “link tree”, which has links to various resources such as the web site, social media sites and videos. One of the codes is specific for giving to potential delegates; the other is geared toward school administrators or other recruiters.

1. National Americanism Conference

Director Koppin reported that he, David Ridenour, Melissa Fowle, Steve Masowick, Mark Weldon, Richard Schuck, Christie White and Bob Schmitt attended this year, and called upon them to share what they took away.

Dave Ridenour noted the program was not as well organized as in the past, due to the people running it all being new. He read the evaluations on our two Boys Nation delegates.

Melissa Fowle reported on the situation faced by the California program. This was created by a female state representative who had attended their Girls State, but thought that program was inferior to what Boys State offered. She drafted, and got passed, legislation that the two programs had to become “equal” in terms of facilities provided and quality of content. This has predictably caused major problems, one being that the boys program has to cut their numbers back to what the girls program has. She also mentioned the Missouri programs, which joined forces to conduct their programs at the same time and location. The programs are still separately run, but are able to share some expenses and resources. They had serious challenges in getting their schedules to mesh.

Steve Masowick noticed that most other programs don’t have the resources we have. We are blessed to have the staff that we do.

Mark Weldon said a lot of focus was on the future of our programs with social issues being forced on us. In the past this has included things like the transgender issue, now it concerns equity between programs. Mark also noted that the Boys and Girls Nation programs are protected from this kind of mandate under federal law, but state programs are not protected.

Rich Schuck said he made contacts to possibly visit the Missouri program next year. They are also interested in visiting us. Nationwide, almost all the programs are down in numbers from their pre-covid peak. He observed that most of the other attendees were younger than our delegation.

Christie White said the National Judge Advocate had good information to consider. One example is that if we may not have insurance coverage for delegates going off campus. She also talked with other programs about potential funding ideas and sources.

Jim Koppin commented on the South Carolina presentation on succession planning, and has passed out letters to our section heads prompting them think about succession planning in their sections. He noted that we had a small taste of the importance of this last year with the covid outbreak. Two quotes that caught his attention were “Boys State cannot be explained, it can only be experienced’, and “It doesn’t matter how good your message is if no one hears it”.

**2022 Program Critique Director Koppin**

The 2022 program started with 640 delegates. In 2021 the number was 595.

A major headache was the small covid outbreak. Fortunately, we only had to quarantine four people. Jim gave special thanks to the medical staff for going above and beyond in dealing with the situation. Melissa Schmitt was especially helpful. Jim said she was an “angel” and has thanked her personally for her efforts. He thanked everyone who stepped up to keep things going.

We need more Legionnaires to participate in the cities and interact with the delegates. If you agree to be a City Commissioner you need to be at the city meetings. The students want to interact with us. Melissa has said she has plenty of volunteers for this year, so Jim has suggested she assign two Legionnaires to each city.

We have a couple of committees working on getting the word out to more people about our program.

We need to increase our staff if the program is to grow. Jim asked that we each recruit at least one person. He also noted that we need to find someone to take some drone footage of the program. Jim Morrison said Miami University actually has a drone for such purposes.

Last year the blood drive resulted in 167 pints of blood donated. This is one of the biggest blood drives in southern Ohio.

Check the staff lists in your packet and make sure your information is correct. Let Christie know of any changes.

We need one more wizard for the 2023 program. Let us know if you have any candidates.

We do have a mini-mall girl for next year. Mattie Grace is Grant’s daughter.

Kevin Motter said we need more Legionnaires to hand out pins and shake hands of the delegates after graduation.

**2023 Program Administration** **President Ridenour**

A. Miami University site issues- Housing (Grant Grace)

All facilities should be the same, except possibly the Miami Inn. It may be taken off-line

for renovations.

B. Administration (Jerry White/ Mark Weldon)

Mark Weldon requested that those who want a private room for medical reasons put

enough information on the staff information form so he can make sure they get the

housing they need. Background check release forms must be filled out completely. Jerry

White noted that background checks must be done BEFORE arriving at the program.

Be careful on dates you put down that you will be attending. If not sure, list the earliest date

you might be arriving. If you come earlier your room key will not work.

**Section Head reports**

Elections – Melissa Fowle

Melissa said that she brought up the idea of administering a poll worker oath to the city party chairmen and secretaries, since they serve this function during our elections. This idea was well received by the Executive Committee. The oath would be given at the Monday evening assembly.

Melissa stressed that City Commissioners are considered employees of the Secretary of State’s office, and are expected to be at all the meetings & caucuses for their assigned city. Melissa said she plans to add a County Commissioner to each county. We had this years ago, but got away from it due to staffing issues. With our smaller numbers this is a good time to bring it back.

State Government and Visitation – Bob Schmitt/Chris Ballard

Dan Willis said their section does project learning. Covid hit and we were unable to have our usual visitors from the State of Ohio, so we had virtual visitation with the State employees. Last year we did a hybrid model where the state employees were given a choice between attending virtually or in person. We received forty Chromebook laptop computers donated by the state educational service to facilitate this. That provided additional support for our students because it allowed for additional “pop-in” visits by the state agencies. The students loved it. Dan also described his participation on a radio program that concerned voting.

Campaign Headquarters – Leroy Brinkhoff/Mike Bodie

Grant Grace reported that the electronic campaigning that was initiated last year went well.

County Government – Paul Wiehe/Steve Peltier

Steve said everything ran smoothly. The new facilities are very good. He hopes we can fill them in the near future.

City Goverment–Dick Schuck/Dick Zulch

No report

Recreation – Bob Marino/Jim Starr

Jim Starr said everything went well.

School Boards – Mike Jordan/John Turney

Jon Turney said things went smoothly last year, even though they were short staffed. Mike Jordan was unable to attend, but his preparation work was essential to the smooth functioning of the section.

Courts – Kevin Dunn/Nick Selvaggio

Nick Selvaggio expressed thanks headquarters and Grant for their relocation help. This year the section went fully electronic. With the addition of Josh Brown and Mike Kemerer the Court section has become younger and better looking.

Legislative – Bill Pennell/ Terry Estepp

Bill reported that Terry Estepp has told him that he probably won’t be able to come back to the program, which he deeply regrets. Last year everything went well.

Bank & Realty – Jim Hoessle/Brent Beeker

Jim Hoessle said they had a good year. They were able to have good speaker come in. Brent is the brains of the operation.

Utilities – Darell Bishop/William Hoff

Bill Hoff said everything went well. They’ll be ready to go for next year.

Hetuck – Jesse Thomas

No report

Chief Counselor – Grant Grace/Todd Gerber

Grant expressed his thanks to Chris Ballard and Matt Brown for stepping up when covid took him and Todd out of the game. Grant said they had been working on succession even before this. Currently Todd Gerber would be his recommendation to if Grant had to be replaced. Matt Brown is going to assume the position of Assistant Chief Counselor.

Chris Schmitt reported on a pilot project he started last year to give delegates an entertaining way of picking up ideas for issues to tackle. He created the “Buckeye Business Journal”, a mock publication. He handed out copies to those at this meeting. This was initiated on a trial basis in State Government last year. This worked well enough that he wants to expand it for use by all sections next year. Let him know about any ideas or content you would like to see in the future.

Grant reported that Steve Oechsle and his wife had baby boy yesterday.

Band –Jeff Jordan/ Dierre Upshaw

Jeff said everything went extremely well this year. The Space Force now has an official song which will have to be added to the Armed Forces Salute. He stated that Dierre Upshaw is a fantastic Assistant Director, and praised him highly. Our smaller numbers have created logistical issues in assigning the right boys to the necessary instruments. He had to have students pinch hit on unfamiliar instruments last year, but they did fine.

Mini Mall – Charlie Kvochick

They had a great year with over $16,000 in sales. Credit cards were used for 50% of the purchases. There are no plans for any new items this year.

Public Relations – Steve Oechsle

Jim Koppin reported that he had approached Jerry White about serving as section head to replace Bill Strong. Jerry agreed on condition that the appointment be approved by the Executive Committee. Appointment was approved last night.

Jerry White said he appreciates the opportunity, and will be trying to carry on what Bill Strong accomplished. He will meet with the section counselors so they can bring him up to speed.

Computer Support – Rick Gallaher/Evan Anderson

Rick said most everything went well. Our biggest problem was with copiers. Let him know of any different computer needs you may have for next year ASAP.

“No Shows” – John Garvey/Steve Scherer

Grant related that we had less than six confirmed no shows. There were some who had reported off to someone other than someone who should have received the information.

Hall of Fame Report-Darell Bishop

Darell Bishop said he had three candidates for this year. If you have any ideas for people to nominate, let him know through Christie.

**Delegate Increase Planning Committee Report** **Mark Weldon**

The Committee met last week. The focus of the meeting was getting the right information to the right people in a timely manner. The QR code project presented earlier in the meeting was a result of the meeting.

**Suggestions for Daily Schedule** **Director Koppin**

Changes to the Daily Schedule must submitted no later than the Spring meeting.

**Good of the Program President Ridenour**

David Ridenour read the obituary of 101 year old Erle Thomas Alexander from Bowling Green. The obituary noted his attendance at Buckeye Boys State in 1938.

Steve Peltier suggested we think about possibly consider changing to having delegates arrive on Saturday, and have graduation the following Saturday after the close of government business. This might help offset the instructional time we lost when the program was shortened to eight days. He didn’t want discussion at this meeting, just think about it and we can talk about it later.

Dick Schuck shared a letter he sent to his local funeral homes about limiting the rendering of honors to funeral homes and churches during the winter. This is something he initiated due to safety concerns about the older members of their honors detail. He has done this for several years and it has worked well for everybody.

Melissa Fowle reported that she has collected information by district on posts and high schools participating in Boys State. She presented this information to the district Americanism chairs. Christie has this information if you want to see it.

Grant Grace reported that John Garvey’s wife, Michelle, is in hospice with cancer. Their 25th anniversary was just after the 2022 program. She seems to be improving somewhat right now, but that may only be temporary.

Dave Ridenour said he has been inquiring about having new windbreaker jackets made up for staff. He requested authorization to pursue this and possibly have them made available through the Mini-mall. Jim Koppin replied that the previous jackets were arranged for privately, once by Tom Boughton and the last time by Chuck Heller. Christie said she can look into having some done, but she needs to know specifically what you want.

Steve Peltier brought up the discussion from the Executive Committee about synthetic flag disposal. Darrell Bishop had brought up a resolution from the Department of Vermont concerning disposal of nylon and polyester flags. Burning the synthetic flags releases toxic fumes similar to those encountered from the burn pits. The suggestion is that we only burn cotton flags. We can eliminate the synthetic flags from our disposal program. Darell said that, in his area, a company that incinerates medical waste will burn the synthetic flags if they are boxed up.

**Sick Call** **President Ridenour**

Ron Chapman’s wife, Karen, has been hospitalized with blood clots.

Melissa said that she spoke to Terry Estepp. He is moving very slowly, and has said he probably can’t come back to the program.

Ruth Crutcher, had her colon removed recently. She has been recovering well.

Gary Bishop has esophogeal cancer and is undergoing treatment.

Mike Jordan’s wife has had a lot of problems and is in a rehab facility in Ashland. Mike goes to visit every day. Mike is doing OK, but would like to have her home.

Charlie Sollberger is not doing very well.

Melissa Schmitt’s cancer is in remission.

**Meeting Adjourned at 1:53pm following a benediction by Melissa Fowle and Salute to the colors.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Mark Weldon, Secretary**