

# BUCKEYE BOYS STATE

## Trustee and Commissioners Meeting

October 14, 2023 – Department Headquarters - Delaware  
Meeting Minutes

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

**Trustees Present:** President Melissa Fowle, 1st Vice President Steve Masowick, 2nd Vice President Robert Schmitt, Secretary Mark Weldon (PP), Director James Koppin (PP), Bart Arndt, Dennis Aselage, Leroy Brinkhoff, Robert Clark, Gary Cox, Jr., Brian Fowle, Richard Gallaher, Malcolm Glasgow, Jim Hoessle, William Hoff, Terry Kaufman, John Life, John Looker, Dennis Morrison, Kevin Motter, Stanley Oren, Steve Peltier (PP), William Pennell(PP), David Ridenour (PP), Richard Schuck (PP), James Starr, Bruce Tolle, Rodger Wiant, Gerald White (PP), Paul Wiehe(PP), Nathan Winkleman, Richard Zulch (PP).

**Commissioners Present:** Joshua Brown, Albert Buxton, Robert Clark, Frank “Joe” Navarre, Roy Terry.

**Consultants Present:** Richard Ching, Kevin Dunn, Grant Grace, Douglas Hancock, Jeff Jordan, Jason Kovatch, Mike Leone, Steve Oechsle, Nick Selvaggio, Jon Turney, Dierre Upshaw, Dan Willis.

**Staff:** Christie White

**Guests:** Dennis Antonio, Joseph Ball, Nicholas Ball, Frank Barnes, Matthew Chamberlain, William Genocchio, Scott Hunter, William Lindsay, John Loudermilk, Jacob Marx, Timothy Masters, Kenneth Parsons, Mike Schreffler.

**Director Koppin** called for a moment of silence for the following program former staff members who passed away since our last meeting:

Lou Dimmerman  
Art Langerman  
Nelfred Kimerline

**Reading of minutes from the annual meeting: June 15, 202**

David Ridenour moved to dispense with the reading, and approve the minutes as distributed. Rodger Wiant seconded.

**Mark Weldon**

**MOTION PASSED**

**Personnel Report**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Schmitt**

A. Trustee Resignations  
None

B. Trustee Recommendations  
None

C. Commissioner Applications

a. Alex Rowen

Bill Pennell moved to accept the application pending attendance at the 2024 program, and assign him to State Government. Bart Arndt seconded. **MOTION PASSED**

D. 2023 Program Attendance Evaluations- Commissioners

a. Did not attend- Conner Evans, Lee Price, David Taylor, David Wiles

b. Attended-

i. James Ankarberg- Bill Pennell

Nate Winkleman moved to fully accept the application. Rodger Wiant seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

ii. Dennis Antonio- Paul Wiehe

Paul Weihe moved to fully accept the application, and assign him the Department of Transportation in State Government. Bart Arndt seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

iii. Judy Johnson- Paul Wiehe

Paul Wiehe moved to fully accept the application. John Looker seconded

**MOTION PASSED**

iv. Frank Barnes- Jim Hoessle/Melissa Fowle

Mark Weldon moved to fully accept the application. Rick Gallaher seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

v. Kenneth Parsons- Kevin Dunn/Melissa Fowle

Rick Gallaher moved to fully accept the application. Richard Schuck seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

vi. William Genochio- Kevin Dunn

Rick Gallaher moved to fully accept the application. Gary Cox, Jr. seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

vii. Bryan Holden- Jim Starr

James Starr moved to fully accept the application. David Ridenour seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

viii. William Lindsay- Richard Schuck

Richard Schuck moved to hold approval until he attends the 2024 program and works in the Legislature. Dennis Morrison seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

ix. Randy Mills- Richard Schuck

Richard Schuck moved to fully accept the application. Kevin Motter seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

x. Jacob Marx- Darell Bishop

Rodger Wiant moved to fully accept the application. William Hoff seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

xi. Joseph Knable- Jerry White

Jim Koppin moved to table the application for further consideration. David Ridenour seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

xii. Joseph Ball- Bob Schmitt

Mark Weldon moved to hold approval until he works in State Government Section in the 2024 program. Dennis Morrison seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

xiii. Scott Hunter- Bob Schmitt

Bob Schmitt moved to fully accept the application. Gary Cox, Jr., seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

xiv. John Loudermilk- Bob Schmitt

Bob Schmitt moved to fully accept the application. Gary Cox, Jr., seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

E. Consultant Applications

a. Matthew Chamberlain

Steve Peltier moved to accept the application pending attendance at the 2024 program, and assign him to Court Section. Dick Zulch seconded. **MOTION PASSED**

b. John Vrzal

David Ridenour moved to accept the application. John Life seconded. **MOTION PASSED**

F. 2023 Program Attendance Evaluations- Consultants

a. Attended-

i. Thomas Sigel- Paul Wiehe

Paul Wiehe moved to fully accept the application. David Ridenour seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

ii. Mike Shreffler- Jon Turney

Mark Weldon moved to fully accept the application. David Ridenour seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

iii. Nicholas Ball- Charlie Kvochick

Rick Gallaher moved to fully accept the application. Bruce Tolle seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

**Appointment of Samsung Scholarship Committee**

**President Fowle**

A. Mike Leone

B. Ron Chapman- Chairman

C. Steve Scherer

Steve Peltier moved to approve the committee. Dick Zulch seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

**Appointment of Hall of Fame Committee**

**President Fowle**

A. Darell Bishop- Chairman

B. John Looker

David Ridenour moved to add Jeff Jordan to the committee. John Looker seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

Dick Schuck moved to approve the committee as amended. Bill Pennell seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

**Appointment of Boys Nation Selection Committee**

**President Fowle**

A. Dave Ridenour, Chairman

B. John Turney

C. Mark Weldon

D. Dan Favreau

E. Nate Winkleman

Dick Schuck moved to approve the committee. Paul Wiehe seconded.

**MOTION PASSED**

**Dates for 2024 Boys State**

**Director Koppin**

A. April 12<sup>th</sup>&13<sup>th</sup>, 2024- Spring Meeting

B. June 9<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 2024- 2024 Program

**Director's Report**

**Director Koppin**

A. Establish 2024 enrollment fee

Fee will remain \$300.00 for 2024 program.

## B. National Americanism Conference

David Ridenour reported that Boys Nation is developing an application process for any members who may want to be on staff for BN. Selection will be based on the skills needed by the at any given time. They are also working on a video that explains the best selection criteria to assist state programs in identifying qualifying students. Ohio had the #1 rated delegate at the 2023 program.

Dick Schuck said he re-connected with the Missouri people. They have separated their boys and girls programs. Dick is planning to visit them next year, and they want to visit us. New York would also like to see our program.

Bob Schmitt mentioned that combining or merging of BS/GS programs was discussed. He believes it can't happen in Ohio due to the attitude of the Auxiliary. He also noted that no Ohio campus could handle both programs simultaneously if we get our numbers back up.

Melissa Fowle remarked on an opportunity that the Oklahoma & New Mexico governors had to talk to each other about an issue created in one of the programs. This was a learning opportunity and might be something to be incorporated later. She also mentioned that the Samsung Scholarship application process will be open on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. We were also informed that it takes 10-20 hours to complete the application.

Christie White focused on issues of liability and Sexual Assault and Molestation (SAM) training. National wants to make it mandatory for staff in all the Legion youth programs to take this training. She also suggested that anyone contracting to have buses transport delegates to the program check to make sure the bus company has adequate liability coverage. She also mentioned one of the programs that took pictures of all the delegates from the same home county to send to their local media.

Melissa remarked that a marketing language issue is created when we use the word "free" in describing our programs. This suggests a lesser value to the program. One suggestion is to substitute the word "scholarship".

Director Koppin gave a brief rundown of speaker schedule on Friday. He thought National Judge Advocate Mark Seavey was the most informative. Overall, the breakout sessions on Saturday were the most productive.

### **2023 Program Critique**

### **Director Koppin**

Director Koppin said he was unaware of any major problems or issues to report. Let him know now if you had a problem or concern.

Kevin Motter asked for clarity on parents being allowed to go in the dorm buildings during drop off. There was conflicting information being given out. Grant Grace said we encourage parents to drop and go, but it does not create a problem if they want to go in with their son. The counselors know how to deal with them.

Miami will have fewer computer labs available in 2024, so we may have computer access conflicts due to other activities also occurring on campus.

Christie White mentioned that there is now a 14 minute Boys State promotional video on the Department web site. It is not on the BBS site at this time

Roger Wiant asked about our policy on trans-gender students. He noted that we had one last year that was very obvious. John Life noted that Ohio only allows male or female identification for drivers licenses and state ID's.

Department Judge Advocate Josh Brown said they are researching the issue and we will do what the law requires.

Christie White advised that John Looker will be inducted into the next class of the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame.

Dick Schuck remarked on the decline in the food quality last year. This may be due to the University contracting the food service instead of handling it in-house.

Grant Grace questioned the appropriateness of a couple of our speakers last year. Their comments crossed the line of the non-partisanship we stress when we're explaining our program.

## **2024 Program Administration**

**Mark Weldon**

Mark stressed the importance of being accurate on the dates of attendance you list on your Staff Information Form, and the importance of abiding by the dates you put down. When you arrive before or after the dates you listed, it creates reporting issues that have to be resolved for Paula and the University.

## **Section Head reports**

Elections – Brian Fowle said everything went well last year. They had very good help from those who served as City Commissioners.

State Government and Visitation – Bob Schmitt said they're always ready to go. Dan Willis report that the Governor was very pleased with his visit to program last year. Dan noted that we good control of the question and answer session for the first time. This is the second year we've had 40 Chromebook computers loaned to by Educational Services of Central Ohio. These allow for more contact with real the real government counterparts of our delegates..

Campaign Headquarters – Leroy Brinkhoff relayed from Mike Bodie that everything went well.

County Government – Steve Peltier said they had a very good session last year. The assistance they had from the sectional consultants was excellent. Steve mentioned some of the things he will need from the other sections.

City Government – Dick Schuck stated that transitioning to the new city/county format that was approved at the annual meeting won't be as difficult as some think. Dick Zulch expressed special thanks to Richard Ching, the lead sectional counselor. He noted that they have been able to move to using more realistic issues for the delegates to work with. There is more education and less busy work. Dennis Morrison thanked all the counselors for all they do.

Recreation – Jim Starr said everything went well. Paula was helpful as she always is and just makes things happen.

School Boards – John Turney said they had a great year. The new staff members are a great asset and were extremely helpful. The State Superintendent visited and will be a good resource in the future. He is a former Boys State delegate and should be a resource for recruiting. He noted that Mike Jordan is still the engine that drives the section during the off season.

Courts – Kevin Dunn said it was an interesting year. He would like to get bar exam on line so students can take and pass it before they attend the program. Want to bring in more good speakers. Nick Selvaggio related that

when he teaches continuing education for judges and prosecutors he always surveys audience as to how many attended either Boys State or Girls State and is always surprised at how many there are. He had a session with five judges this morning and three of them had attended Boys State. This demonstrates the impact that we have.

Mini Mall – President Fowle, doing a very creditable Charlie Kovachick impersonation, reported a new record of \$17,000 dollar in sales. For the first time credit card sales exceeded cash sales. No new products are planned for 2024.

Legislature – Bill Pennell noted that Rodger Wiant does a good job vetting their speakers to prevent displays of partisanship. The section has not had a problem with this for many years. Rodger Wiant said their counselors are amazing, and they’re the ones who get a lot of the speakers. Otherwise the section is good to go.

Bank & Realty – President Fowle said they’ll have a new banker coming in to speak next year. Otherwise no changes expected.

Utilities –William Hoff said last year was the best year they’ve had. The delegates they had were very good. del

Hetuck/Public Relations – Jerry White stated this year was his first opportunity to see the PR operation in depth. The staff members do a lot of work that no one sees. They are having discussions about ways to make PR more be of even value next year. A lot of credit goes to John Vrzal, Steve Oechsle and Nick Miller.

Chief Counselor – Grant Grace said last year went very, very well. The City Commissioners have a huge impact on the delegates and program. He cautioned Legion staff to not interfere with delegate movement. Let the counselors handle delegate movement and instructions. There was an issue with staff yelling at counselors in front of delegates. This not acceptable under any circumstances Let Grant or Matt Brown know if there problems to be dealt with.

Band –Jeff Jordan observed that they had a smaller band but a tremendous year. One challenge last year was only having six trumpets. Most of the music we use relies heavily on trumpets. He and Dierre are always looking for new music and things to do. We have to do a better job of recruiting for the band. He is looking for more partnership with the Miami Music Education department and athletic department. He noted how important Dierre Upshaw is.

Computer Support – Rick Gallaher said voting will probably be the biggest challenge this since we’re losing computer labs. He needs timely input (well before April) from section heads for equipment and locations. Don’t move equipment once it has been placed.

“No Shows” – Grant reported that John Garvey and Steve Scherer are no-shows today.

#### Hall of Fame Report

No report

#### Delegate Increase Planning Committee Report

#### Committee

Mark Weldon reported the committee met in August. They reviewed the results of the mix of in-person and virtual orientations. By the time the virtual sessions started on May 16<sup>th</sup>, more than half the delegates had already attended an in-person session. We will be repeating the same process next year. The rest of the meeting focused on how to reach those students who might be interested in the program, but never even hear about it. Mark noted that our delegates come from much fewer than half of the high schools in the state. We need to find ways to recruit that don’t rely on the schools. Kevin Dunn said he had good results approaching parochial

schools in his area, which had not been done previously. Mark and Bill Pennell will be going to the State Capitol on Tuesday to address a home school group.

Suggestions for Daily Schedule

President Fowle/Director Koppin

Kevin Motter suggested limiting the listing of police training sessions to the Tuesday night orientation and Wednesday morning session.

Good of the Program

President Fowle

Jerry White spoke about his time showing James Baca, the Executive Director of National, around the program. He was able to see every aspect of the program. His comments were very positive, and had no negative impressions. He stated several times that he understands why we're considered the premier program in the country. He also said we are "the gold standard".

Bart Arndt has been asked to make some door stops for use in the various sections, and needs a count of how many are wanted. Grant stated that propping doors open in the office areas is not a problem for the University.

Director Koppin reported that one of our counselors, Devin Clark, has submitted a proposal for hosting and maintaining a new web site. **The cost would be \$300.00 a year. Bob Schmitt moved to approve the expenditure. John Life seconded. MOTION PASSED**

Rick Gallaher noted that Evan Anderson has paid for our current website out of his own pocket.

Melissa Fowle reported that the Delegates Closet went through just about everything that was donated last year.

Malcolm Glasgow said the brochure is the best recruiting tool we have.

Frank Barnes remarked that our time spent with delegates makes a difference, and thanked all of us for this work.

Sick Call

President Fowle

Doug Whitney recently had a hip replacement.

Terry Estep is getting better, but probably won't be able to return to the program.

William Dittebrand's mother died a couple of weeks ago.

Terry Kauffman will be having a major surgery in two weeks.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:45pm following a salute to the colors, and a benediction by SteveMasowick.**

**Respectfully submitted:**

**Mark Weldon, Secretary**