

BUCKEYE BOYS STATE

Trustee and Commissioners Meeting

October 11, 2025 – Department Headquarters - Delaware
Meeting Minutes

The Trustee and Commissioner Meeting of American Legion Buckeye Boys State was called to order by President Robert Schmitt at 10:00 a.m., at the American Legion Department of Ohio Headquarters, Delaware, Ohio, with a Salute to the Colors, Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation by Melissa Fowle.

Attendance:

Officers: President Robert Schmitt, 1st Vice President John Looker, 2nd Vice President Charles Kovachick, Secretary Mark Weldon,

Trustees: Director James Koppin (P), Bart Arndt, Dennis Aselage, Chris Ballard, Albert Buxton, Robert Clark, Melissa Fowle (P), Rick Gallaher, Malcolm Glasgow, Jim Hoessle, William Hoff, John Life, Dennis Morrison, Kevin Motter, Frank Navarre, Stanley Oren, Richard Schuck (P), James Starr, Bruce Tolle, Gerald White (P), Rodger Wiant, Jean Wilson, Nate Winkleman, Richard Zulch(P).

Staff: Christie White

Commissioners: Joshua Brown, William Genochio, Bryan Holden, William Jackson, Judy Johnson, John Loudermilk, Jacob Marx, Sharon McClain, Kenneth Parsons.

Consultants: Richard Ching, Timothy Conway, John Garvey III, Grant Grace, Jeff Jordan, Mike Leone, Mark Lutz, Steve Oechsle, John Vrzal.

Guests: Brad Beatty, William Drexler, Michael Kennedy, Emily Stilwell, Sylvia Thweatt. Lily Vrzal, Steven Yagelski.

Reading of minutes from the annual meeting: June 12, 2025

Mark Weldon

Al Buxton moved to approve the minutes with a minor correction. Charlie Kovachick seconded and the motion passed.

Personnel Report

2nd Vice President Kvochick

A. Trustee Resignations

a. Bruce Tolle

Richard Schuck moved to accept the resignation. Richard Zulch seconded and the motion passed. Schuck then moved to designate him as Trustee Emeritus. Zulch seconded and the motion passed.

B. Trustee Recommendations

2nd Vice President Kvochick

The Executive Committee recommended appointing the following Commissioners to Trustee status:

Kenneth Parsons to the 2029 group

Bill Hoff moved to make the appointment. Gary Cox Jr. seconded and the motion passed.

Bryan Holden to the 2028 group

Charles Kovachick moved to make the appointment. Rick Gallaher seconded and the motion passed.

Joseph Ball to the 2028 group

Charles Kvochick moved to make the appointment. Mark Weldon seconded and the motion passed.

Scott Hunter to the 2027 group

Charles Kvochick moved to make the appointment. Gary Cox, Jr., seconded and the motion passed.

Judy Johnson to the 2026 group

Charles Kvochick moved to make the appointment. James Koppin seconded and the motion passed.

Frank Barnes to the 2026 group

Charles Kvochick moved to make the appointment. Jim Hoessle seconded and the motion passed.

William Genochio to the 2026 group

Charles Kvochick moved to make the appointment. Melissa Fowle seconded and the motion passed.

Jacob Marx to the 2026 group

Charles Kvochick moved to make the appointment. John Life seconded and the motion passed.

C. Commissioner Resignations/ Applications

Russell Chapman

Charles Kvochick moved to accept the application pending attendance at the program. John Life seconded and the motion passed.

D. 2025 Program Attendance Evaluations- Commissioners

- a. Did not attend- Conner Evans, David Taylor, David Wiles, Brendan Tisher, John Betterson

Charles Kvochick moved to table these applications until they attend the program. Bart Arndt seconded and the motion passed.

- b. Attended-

- i. Brad Beatty

Nate Winkleman moved to approve Brad as a Commissioner. Gary Cox, Jr., seconded and the motion passed.

- ii. Dean Boyers

Al Buxton moved to accept Dean as a Commissioner. Bart Arndt seconded and the motion passed.

- iii. Michael Kennedy

Buxton moved to accept Michael as a Commissioner. Kevin Motter seconded and the motion passed.

- iv. Bruce Nixon

Jim Hoessle moved to accept Bruce as a Commissioner. Melissa Fowle seconded and the motion passed.

- v. Gabriel Ramos

Al Buxton moved to accept Gabriel as a Commissioner. Bart Arndt seconded and the motion passed.

vi. Emily Stilwell
Robert Clark moved to accept Emily as a Commissioner. Al Buxton seconded and the motion passed.

vii. Sylvia Thweatt
Al Buxton moved to accept Sylvia as a Commissioner. Judy Johnson seconded and the motion passed.

viii. Brent Woerner
Richard Schuck moved to accept Brent as a Commissioner. Richard Zulch seconded and the motion passed.

ix. William Drexler
Bill Hoff moved to accept William as a Commissioner. Malcolm Glasgow seconded and the motion passed.

E. Consultant Applications
None

F. 2025 Program Attendance Evaluations- Consultants

a. Attended-

i. Chris Epley
Chales Kvochick moved to accept Chris as a consultant. Gary Cox, Jr., seconded and the motion passed.

ii. Lily Vrzal
Melissa Fowle moved to accept Lily as a Consultant. John Looker seconded and the motion passed.

iii. Steven Yagelski
Richard Schuck moved to accept Steven as a Consultant. Kevin Motter seconded and the motion passed.

iv. Steve Scherer (reinstatement)
Charles Kvochick moved to reinstate Steve as a Consultant. Rick Gallaher seconded and the motion passed.

Appointment of Samsung Scholarship Committee

PresidentSchmitt

- A. Mike Leone
- B. Ron Chapman- Chairman
- C. Jacob Marx

Al Buxton moved to accept the committee appointments. Gary Cox, Jr., seconded and the motion passed.

Appointment of Hall of Fame Committee

President Schmitt

- A. Jeff Jordan - Chairman
- B. John Looker
- C. Ryan Lee

D. Chris Schmitt
E. Richard Alberts

Jacob Marx moved to accept the committee appointments. John Life seconded and the motion passed.

Appointment of Boys Nation Selection Committee

President Schmitt

A. Dave Ridenour, Chairman
B. John Turney
C. Mark Weldon
D. Nate Winkleman, Co-chairman
E. John Life

Bart Arndt moved to accept the committee appointments, and appointing Nathan Winkleman as co-chair. Robert Clark seconded and the motion passed.

Dates for 2026 Boys State

Director Koppin

A. April 17th&18th, 2026- Spring Meeting
B. June 14th-21st, 2026- 2026 Program

Director's Report

Director Koppin

A. Establish 2026 enrollment fee

Rick Gallaher moved to keep the fee at \$300.00. Rodger Wiandt seconded and the motion passed.

B. National Americanism Conference

Director Koppin, President Schmitt, 1st VP Looker, 2nd VP Kvochick and Christie White attended the conference this year.

Director Koppin said attendance was down drastically this year. As has been the case for the past few years, he believes there is too much attention devoted to Boys Nation and not enough to the needs of the state programs. As usual, most of the good ideas we get come from the break-out sessions.

Christie White noted that we seem to be ahead of many other programs when it comes to making improvements. Some of the problems other programs are facing we dealt with years ago. Her main takeaway is that she be working on the 250th anniversary of USA this year with the Americanism programs..

President Schmitt said the national Legion is pushing for America 250 to be a big deal. They want all the posts to participate with their communities for events and activities with a 250 theme. Ideas can be found at USA250.org. We now caucus with smaller programs since our numbers have dropped. They have bigger and worse issues than we do, more so than the big programs. He also noted the recued attendance and attributes this to the conference having less value to the participants than previously, when weighed against the inconvenience and expense of attending.

VP Kvochick attended his first conference. He was surprised that this was the first time had discussed the use of a list server, as the use of these has been standard in the business world for years.

C. 2025 Program Critique

Director Koppin said last year went well overall. We are already talking with Paula Green to plan for the 2026 program. The campus hot water project is still creating issues with access to facilities, primarily the arena. The University is looking at plans to build a new basketball arena. We don't know how that may affect the program. Paula complimented us on the results of the blood drive. The goal was 185 units and we collected 209 units.

2026 Program Administration

President Schmitt

Mark Weldon reported that we will be housed in two different dorms this year. He again stressed the need for accuracy and legibility when filling out the staff forms in the packet.

Section Head Reports

Elections – Melissa Fowle

Melissa said she is looking for more volunteers to serve as city commissioners to help with elections. She also expressed her appreciation for all the donations to the Delegates Closet. All donations get used, with any left overs being sent to other area charities at the end of the program. We are always in need of items in smaller sizes.

State Government and Visitation – Chris Ballard

Chris Ballard said the staff is working to incorporate more scenario based training for the delegates. They are also trying to find ways improve the delegate experience at the job fair.

Campaign Headquarters

Grant Grace relayed from Mike Bodie that they are ready to go, and still looking for ways to innovate.

County Government – Al Buxton

Al said everything went very smoothly last year, and he is looking forward to 2026.

City Government–Dick Schuck/Dick Zulch

Dick Schuck reported that the integration of City and County government integration in one building went well last year. He sees no new issues on the horizon.

Recreation –Jim Starr

Jim Starr said everything went well last year, and thanked all who helped.

School Boards – John Turney

Grant-gest year. Professional development

Courts

Josh Brown said Court was extremely pleased with how everything went last year. They made use of more mock cases, but would really prefer to have more “real cases” arising from interactions between the various sections.

Legislative – Nate Winkleman

Nate reported having another great year. The new room they were assigned suited their needs better. Rodger Wiant thanked everyone for their prayers when he had to leave early last year for a family emergency. He said his grand baby is doing well.

Bank & Realty – Jim Hoessle

Jim mentioned they have to add security because someone tried to rob the bank last year. He noted the section has a very strong staff and they are good to go.

Utilities

Jacob Marx stated the section ran as expected and they had good participation from the boys.

Hetuck – Jerry White/Jesse Thomas

Jerry Steve and John for Hetuck. Format changed significantly last year, can always use feedback. Worked well for delegates. Web site continues to be updated.

Chief Counselor – Grant Grace

Grant reported that Dr. Crawford, Miami University President, wants to be more directly involved in our program. The result of those discussions is that we will have a university in each county next year. The delegates will have the opportunity to work with Dr. Crawford and members of his staff.

Grant also noted that this year they both pre and post surveys of the delegates and reported some of the numbers. One of the results was finding that 59% of the delegates bought a city photo, therefore 41% did not. The Counseling staff is looking at less expensive options for taking and producing the photos, and giving all delegates a photo at no cost. Discussions between his staff and headquarter is ongoing.

Grant also observed that the Ohio Youth Leadership Initiative Foundation is working on a poster to send to posts to try to increase post participation. Todd Gerber set up a virtual college fair for Girls State last year and is trying to set up an in person one for them.

Band – Jeff Jordan

This year's band was one of the best of the last few years. Some of the kids could actually sight read music which is a big plus. The delegates learned a record 65 songs in one week. Jeff also noted some of the special moments the band had this year such as the trumpet quintet for the National Anthem and the student bagpiper playing to the empty chair.

Mini Mall – Charlie Kvochick/Tim Conway

Charlie expressed appreciation for all the support he gets. He is looking into suggestions for items to sell that delegates mentioned in their surveys.

Public Relations – Jerry White/Steve Oechsle/John Vrzal

Jerry White noted that 2026 will be the 90th anniversary of Ohio Buckeye Boys State. He sees this as an indication of a successful program. For those looking for a Veterans Day speech, one can be found on the National web site. SAL Squadron 725, the BBS squadron, sponsored 15 delegates to the program last year. He also wants to do something to publicize the delegate's closet.

Computer Support – Rick Gallaher/Evan Anderson

Rick noted that the problems we had with the wi-fi last year should not re-occur.

"No Shows" – Rich Ching

We had a total of 11 no shows in 2025.

Hall of Fame Report

Jeff Jordan

Jeff Jordan noted getting excellent feedback from Dr. Postle, our inductee last year. Our changes to stage program worked well with the inclusion of other prior inductees. The committee is starting the planning process now rather than waiting until closer to the start of the program. Please let Jeff or Christie know of any suggestions for possible future inductees.

Delegate Increase Planning Committee Report

Committee

No report from the committee. President Schmitt noted that we need more Posts involved in area where schools don't have access or hear about the program, while recognizing that part of the problem is losing Posts due to closures

Suggestions for Daily Schedule

President Schmitt/Director Koppin

None made at this meeting. Let Jim of Christie know of any needed changes sooner rather than later.

Good of the Program

President Schmitt

Kevin Motter tried to give away a free 10 x 15 flag.

Christie White reported again receiving the national Daniel O'Connor trophy for best Americanism program this year. We received the same trophy last year. Ohio has won this award a total of nine times, five of them during Jerry Whites tenure. He also won two in arrow, so Christie is shooting for #3 next year to beat his record.

President Schmitt reported on a diversity that was shown at last NEC meeting.

Sick Call

President Schmitt

David Ridenour is having mixed results from his cancer treatments and will be starting radiation treatments. His wife, Jane, is scheduled to get a pacemaker in the next couple of weeks.

Dick Schuck is fighting lung cancer. He has completed radiation and will have his last chemo next week. He is cautiously optimistic about the prognosis

Jim Koppin's wife, Betty, is still battling pancreatic cancer.

Mike Kennedy said he had major cancer surgery in 2023, but the cancer is now making a comeback. Overall he feels he is doing well.

Bill Hoff said his wife passed away on June 19th. He had to leave the 2025 program early when her condition worsened.

Bill also reported that Darrell Bishop fell and was seriously injured. He was hospitalized but is now home.

Staff Member William Lindsey passed away a short time ago.

Meeting adjourned at 12:53pm following a benediction from Melissa Fowle, and a salute to the colors.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Weldon
Secretary