

American Legion Premier Boys State Fall 2025 Meeting Minutes

The Fall meeting was called to order at 1000 hrs. on September 20th, 2025 by Chairman Benigno.

Role call was read and a quorum was present. There were no guests present.

The minutes from the spring meeting were distributed and approved.

The Treasurer's Report:

Expenditures and donations were discussed. The treasure's report was approved as given. A question was posed from a previous citizen in writing regarding additional scholarship monies, and how he could receive those funds since he was awarded the most any citizen could receive. The board elected not to entertain the request. The board did however have conversations about entertaining the idea of donating to the high schools that the two Boys Nation recipients come from on a yearly basis and that money would come out of the general fund and operating budget. Discussion was had around updating the by-laws and adding a zoom meeting in between our fall and spring meetings to discuss matters to strengthen our program.

The Chairman's Report:

Christopher stated that the program is almost where it needs to be and just needs a little fine tuning to get it to where it's more beneficial to the boys and thanked the staff for their commitment and hard work. We are working on marketing and advertising partnerships to assist with the expenses every year. It is crucial that we utilize all our volunteers onsite or remote every year. We need to keep our staff involved. I would hate to see anybody just fall off when they're passionate about the program and they want to come back, but they just can't. The Illinois Counselors Conference is November 13th and 14th. We have paid our fee for a silver sponsorship, which means we get a table with power. We get an opportunity to be part of their social evening, we have our logo on every newsletter that goes out from the time that we signed up, which was two months ago, and every newsletter they sent out until the time that the event happens in November. Chairman Benigno asked for a motion to allow for \$3,000.00 to get merchandise needed for the event. The motion and second was made and the body approved. New recruiting cards are in development. We will be looking into creating our own convention booklet. Possible targeted mailing to the post/district/division chairs. The alumni association is growing and bringing in outside (previous citizens) engagement. We will be continuing with the golden tickets.

Programming Reports:

Updating citizens spreadsheets. Updating citizen registration email response. More constant emails to registered citizens and their parents. Increased social media. New promotional videos. Positive exit interview responses from the citizens. We spoke about fine tuning the registration form to better know the local post in their areas. We spoke about the constant struggles of posts not reaching out to their candidates immediately so that the boy knows that he is going and could make the arrangements. We spoke about different ways to vet our new staff members. We had conversations around the upcoming new contract with EIU, and the additional expenditures it may bring along with logistical changes. We spoke about adding content creators every year and converting the citizen manual to a digital-first format. We will be applying for a Google grant to assist with marketing and advertising. We spoke about our upcoming 50 year partnership with EIU. Everything went well with contests and awards.

Director of Counselors Report:

Staff had a great experience and stated that it may have been the best year they have had. The staff worked well together and overcame a lot of curveballs. Communication will be fine tuned. The hand written letters were all completed this year.

Director of Education Report:

Seminars will be looked at and some may be revamped. There was one issue with a new staff member going off script. That was handled immediately during the session. **Unfinished**

Business:

Citizen recruitment

Illinois grant

New Business:

Presentation of a resolution by Don Smolinski regarding adding a color guard scholarship in the amount of \$2,000.00 annually which will become the Huntley American Legion Post 673 Militia Scholarship to be funded by Post 673. The board of directors added that the recipient of this award will also be given an interview for Boys Nation. There was a motion and second and the motion was approved. John Garris from the 10th District and a staff member brought up some ideas to add to the program and the board is taking those into consideration. We spoke regarding the staff shirts and what that will look like moving forward. We spoke regarding staff anniversaries.

For the Good of the Program:

Make sure Boys State is discussed at all Legion and SAL meetings. Parker Moore gave a wonderful speech at the state convention this year. New staff member was touched by the program and what he got out of it.

The meeting was adjourned at 1240 hrs.