American Legion Essman-Schroeder Post #20
Meeting Minutes
August 18, 2026

Attendees:

Joe Huelskamp	James Zuehlke	Jeff Marks	B.Shane Morris
Mike D'Acquisto	Fred Chart	Conrad Moreno	Kim Smars
Sonya Janicki	Ruby Zwijack	Chet Anderson	Bob Genc
Ken Smars	Keith Schneider ("Tiny")	Ed Nowacki	

Absent: Bruce Hodge (Treasurer's report briefed by Commander Jeff Marks). Rachel Ladewig was absent.

Meeting Called to Order at: 1830 by Commander Jeff Marks
Post the Colors: Sgt at Arms Conrad Moreno
POW/MIA Chair: Sgt at Arms (Hand Salute)
The POW/MIA remembrance was read and observed with a moment of silent prayer.
Opening Prayer: Chaplain Joe Huelskamp (Stand & Remove Covers)
Pledge of Allegiance: All
Pre-Amble to the Constitution: All

- **Recognize any Guests.** 1st District Commander Tom Visintainer and District Administrator Steven Williams (Norway J7 School District) attended. Commander Visintainer introduced himself and spoke briefly about membership, directing members to the 1st District website, https://1dwilegion.org/. 1st Vice Commander Candace Rothering and County Commander John Capriotti had canceled and were unable to attend.
- **Introduction of New Members:** None.

Guest Speaker: Steven Williams, District Administrator – Norway J7 School District
Mr. Williams spoke to the Post about inviting members to visit the school to speak with students about flag etiquette, who American Legion Post 20 is and what it does, what America means to us as Veterans, and our individual military service. He also spoke about his own military career and offered to provide additional notes on that upon request.
Discussion / notes from the floor:

- Bring in Veterans to speak with students directly.
- Demonstrate raising and folding the flag.
- Tie the visit to the anniversary of 9/11.
- Coordinate around Veterans Day.

No motion was made on this item; Steven Williams was asked to follow up with the Post regarding specific dates and times.

Installation of Officers:
Conducted by 1st District Commander Tom Visintainer, installing the officers for the 2026-2027 term.

Commander:	Jeff Marks
Vice Commander:	Chet Anderson
Adjutant:	B. Shane Morris
Treasurer:	Bruce Hodge
Sgt At Arms:	Conrad Moreno
Chaplain:	Joe Huelskamp

Presentation of Awards:
Presented by 1st District Commander Tom Visintainer:

- Honor Guard Awards were presented to: Bruce Hodge, Chet Anderson, Conrad Moreno, David Hannula, Fred Chart, James Zuehlke, Jeff Marks, John Targ, Joe Huelskamp, Ken Smars, Kimberly Smars, Mike D'Acquisto, Rachel Ladewig, B. Shane Morris and Scott Pochowski.
- Jeff Marks received the Commander's Award on behalf of the Post for achieving 100% membership.
- The Post received recognition for its support of the local community through blood donation.

Meeting Minutes: Commander Marks stated the May meeting minutes were sent out via email to all members back in May and then again the week before this meeting. No meetings were held in June or July. Commander Marks requested a motion to accept the May minutes as distributed.

Motioned By: Chet Anderson
Second By: Conrad Moreno
Discussion: None
Motion – Approved

Treasurers Report: Financial report delivered via email by Treasurer Bruce Hodge, who was unable to attend the meeting. (Detailed financial figures are available to members on request and are omitted from the public copy of these minutes.)
Commander Marks asked for a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented:
Motioned By: James Zuehlke
Second By: Keith Schneider. ("Tiny")
Discussion: None
Motion – Approved

Correspondence:

Racine County Commander– Indy Car Races at Milwaukee Mile (Be the One Program Booth):

- The Legion sponsors the Indy Car races; our large semi-tractor trailer booth promotes the Be the One Program, which helps Veterans, Legion members, and the public recognize and support Veterans dealing with PTSD or possible suicidal tendencies.
- Volunteer Legion members staff the booth as Ambassadors for the program. Visitors sign up with their email on an iPad to receive additional info, guidance, and resource contacts for helping a Veteran in need; swag items are provided to visitors.
- The program also hosts a Driver Autograph Session on at least one day (not yet confirmed, possibly Friday) — hundreds line up to meet drivers, take photos, and get autographs. On Race Day, we get to be in the winner's circle and get a photo with the race champion.
- Volunteer shift is roughly 9:00 AM to 4:00 or 5:00 PM, with ample breaks to eat, watch the race, or visit vendors.
- Dates this year: Friday, Aug 28th (practice runs), Saturday, Aug 29th (time trials), Sunday, Aug 30th (the race). Friday may also be the autograph session (not yet confirmed).
- Volunteer slots and parking passes are limited, and credentialing with the track takes about a week via email — not everyone who wants to participate is guaranteed a spot.
- If interested, provide your full name, email, phone number, and available date(s) to Cty Cdr Capriotti by EOD Fri, Aug 21st to be considered.
- Additional questions, please contact John Capriotti at 414-331-4757.
- A follow-up email regarding sign-up was noted from John Capriotti — watch for it.

Racine County Commander – POW/MIA Silent March Invitation:

- The American Legion performs this March nationwide; Racine's Harvey Hansen Post 310 was selected to host this year's event for Wisconsin's 1st District.

- Scheduled for Sunday, September 20th, in Racine, starting at Noon.
- Invitation for our Post to march together with other local Veterans organizations, as a symbol of support for our missing brothers in arms and to show their families they are not forgotten.
- Color Guards, vehicles, and marching veterans are all welcome.
- James Zuehlke, Chet Anderson, Jeff Marks, and B. Shane Morris volunteered to help.
- Fill out the attached form and return it to John Capriotti as soon as possible.
- NOTE: the original request asked for a response by the first week of August — that date has already passed. B. Shane Morris will contact John Capriotti to confirm the Post can still participate.

Waterford High School Music Department – Performance at Pearl Harbor

- WHS band and choir students have been invited to travel to Honolulu, HI in December 2027 to perform at Pearl Harbor.
- Students will participate in ceremonies of remembrance and be able to visit the USS Arizona Memorial and the Battleship Missouri.
- Approximately 6–7 students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch are still financially unable to cover the cost of the trip despite working multiple fundraising events.
- WHS Music Department is asking if we can provide any financial support toward the cost of the trip.

A motion was made to make a donation to the music department. Motion made by James Zuelhke and seconded by Chet Anderson. No discussion. Motion carried.

Waterford Lions Club – Annual Chicken Dinner

- Sunday, Oct 4th. They thanked Joe Huelskamp and James Zuehlke for support received last year.
- Members, spouses, and kids all welcome, primarily in the drive-thru area at Whitford Park.
- Contact Teddy Cain (Lions Club Treasurer) at 262-751-3275 to support.

Wind Lake & Waterford Lions Clubs – Golf Outing

- Sep 26th, 2026 at Rivermoor Golf Club. Sponsorship opportunities available.

Pizza Ranch (Burlington) – Community Impact Fundraising Events

- Pizza Ranch will host a Community Impact Night for the Post, donating a percentage of that night's profits to our organization if we're interested.
- Jeff Marks will reach out to Pizza Ranch to coordinate Post 20's involvement in the fundraiser.

Thank-You Letters
The Post received thank-you letters from Badger Boys State, Badger Girls State, and the Waterford Wolverine Shooting Team (previously listed on the agenda as the "Waterford Trap Shooting Team" — corrected here to match the team's actual name). See the correspondence gallery at the end of these minutes.

Old Business:
- Racine County Meeting was held June 23rd at Post 171 in Union Grove.
- June 13th: Conducted Flag retirement ceremony.
- June 14th: Flag dedication ceremony at River City Lanes.
- Post purchased the State American Legion 2025-2026 raffle tickets; Post 20 bought them all.
- Donation delivered to Palmyra Legion Post to help recover from their fire.
- July 4th: Waterford 4th of July Parade.
- It was brought up at the 4th of July parade that we need magnetic vehicle emblems for the vehicle hauling our trailer — B. Shane has ordered them.

New Business:
- A storm took down some of the flag poles at our Memorial site. Bruce contacted the insurance company; they are not sending an adjustor and instructed us to get cost/quotes, have the work done, and submit for reimbursement (minus our deductible). We are in the process of finding a contractor.
- It was suggested we get newer, lighter, water-resistant spring jackets for the Honors team. Discussed — no formal motion recorded.
- Buddy Check Outreach: members are encouraged to personally check in on fellow members. See the Post 20 Buddy Check letter for talking points. Veteran's Crisis Line: 988 (press 1). Discussed — no formal motion recorded.
- Friday, August 21st, 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM: First Annual Golf Outing fundraiser at Brown's Lake Golf Course — 18-hole scramble w/ cart, lunch, drinks; $125/golfer; banquet with prizes and raffles at Shooters 5:00–7:00 PM. Over 160 businesses solicited, 30+ raffle baskets collected, and 11 foursomes (44 golfers) signed up.
- Friday, August 21st, 7:00 PM: Waterford High School Salute to Service program.

- Saturday, August 22nd: Run'n Erin's meat raffle/fundraiser is cancelled.

Committee Reports:
Budget Committee (Bruce): Bruce had to miss the meeting — no report.
Southern Center (B.): Recreation Committee met August 5th; minutes were sent out. Planning a 2nd Fishing Event for September 25th and looking for volunteers. Next Recreation Committee meeting is September 2nd.
Honor Guard (Mike): Mike thanked the Post and Honor Guard volunteers.
Service Officer (James): Reported that flag disposal is low.

Meat Raffles (Kim): Reminder that meat raffles start up in September — need to establish a calendar of dates/locations and get posters out. No locations secured yet; needs to be reported to 1st District once finalized.
Gun Raffle: Need to establish date, source weapons, and get tickets printed and distributed. Suggested timeframe: October through January.
Pancake Breakfast: The Post voted to move the Pancake Breakfast to January 23rd.
Motioned By: Chet Anderson
Second By: Keith S. ("Tiny")
Discussion: Cooking outside is an issue
Motion Approved — Motion carried
Post Dinner: Nothing new to report.
Fourth of July Parade: Nothing new to report.

For the Good of the Legion:
- Raffle tickets — need to be ordered/distributed.
- WI State / Department items — Cdr Visintainer helped explain.
- Kudos to Joe Huelskamp and Fred Chart for their help to an individual experiencing homelessness.

B. Shane Morris raised the following items:
- Paralyzed Veterans of America – WI Chapter is selling gun raffle tickets for $10.00 each; the drawing is Sunday, September 23, 2026.
- American Legion annual raffle tickets are for sale at $20.00 each; each post is asked to sell 50 tickets. The drawing will be held July 24, 2027. 1st District Commander Tom Visintainer presented the post as to how this money pays for American Legion

programs. Also, stating the previous fundraiser (contract) was taking 60% of proceeds and pocketing it.

- The Post now has a QR code that can be used for various transactions. B. Shane Morris presented a 3D-printed QR code made by Post member David Stern.
- B. Shane Morris also introduced a Square credit-card processing option for future transactions.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 15th @ 6:30 PM.
Closing Prayer: Chaplain (Stand & Remove Covers).
Retire the POW/MIA: Sgt at Arms.
Retire the Colors: Sgt at Arms.

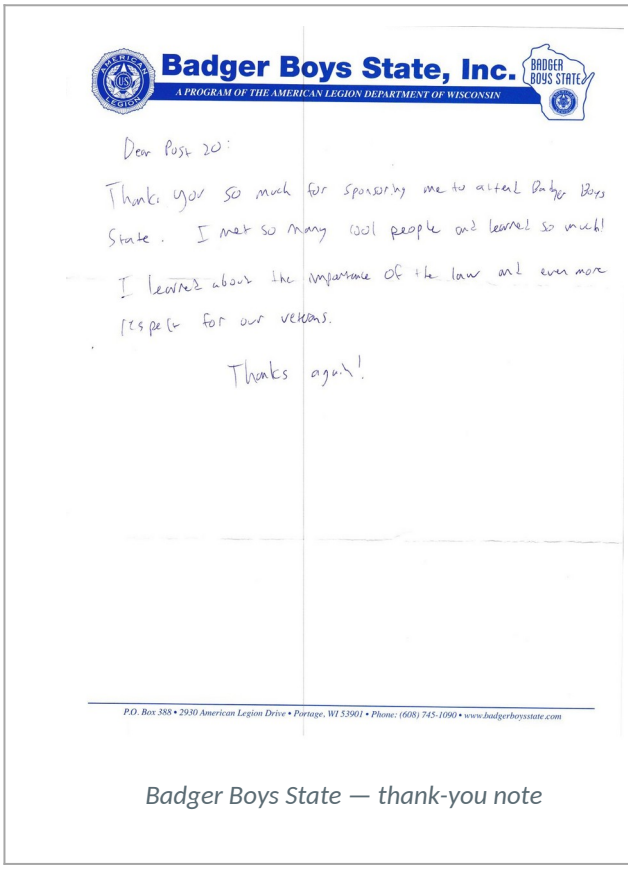
Meeting adjourned at 1942.

Action Items:

- Pull the 2027 membership list and identify who has not yet paid. B. Shane Morris

Correspondence — Letters of Thanks

A few of the thank-you notes the Post received this month:



Badger Boys State, Inc.
A PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

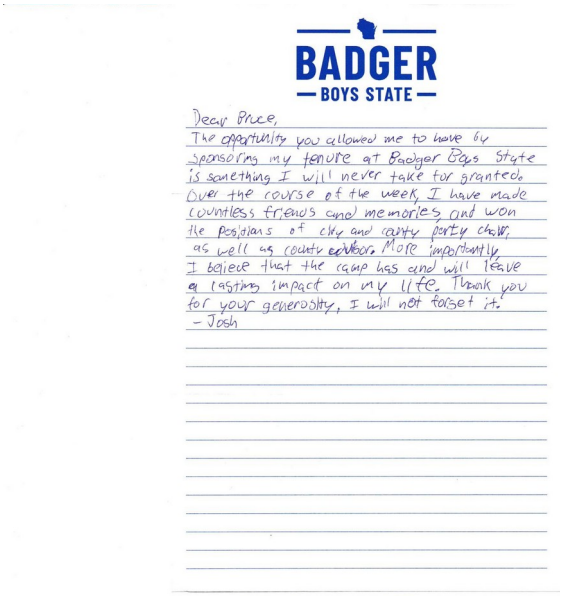
Dear Post 20:

Thank you so much for sponsoring me to attend Badger Boys State. I met so many cool people and learned so much! I learned about the importance of the law and even more respect for our veterans.

Thanks again!

P.O. Box 388 • 2930 American Legion Drive • Portage, WI 53901 • Phone: (608) 745-1090 • www.badgerboysstate.com

Badger Boys State — thank-you note



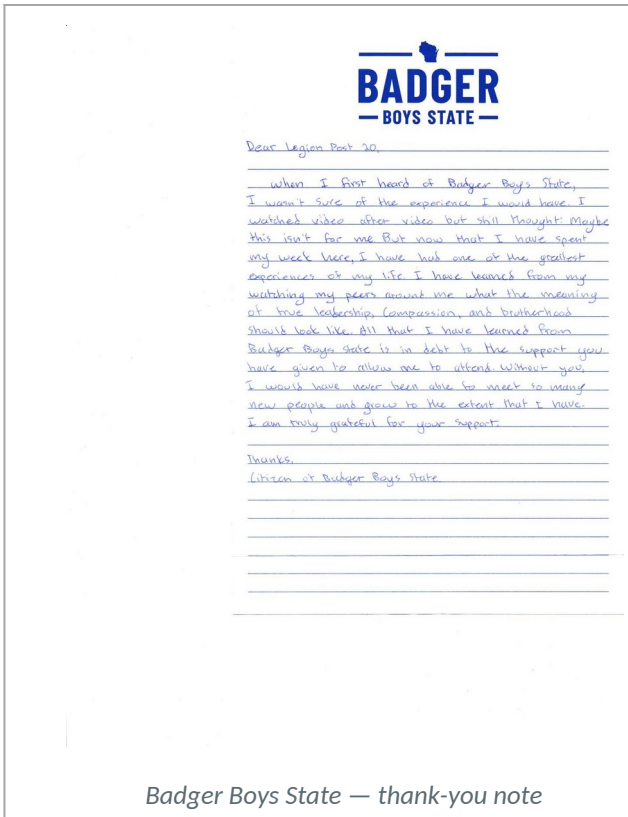
BADGER
BOYS STATE

Dear Bruce,

The opportunity you allowed me to have by sponsoring my tenure at Badger Boys State is something I will never take for granted. Over the course of the week, I have made countless friends and memories and won the positions of city and county party chair, as well as county executive. More importantly, I believe that the camp has and will leave a lasting impact on my life. Thank you for your generosity, I will not forget it.

- Josh

Badger Boys State — from Josh



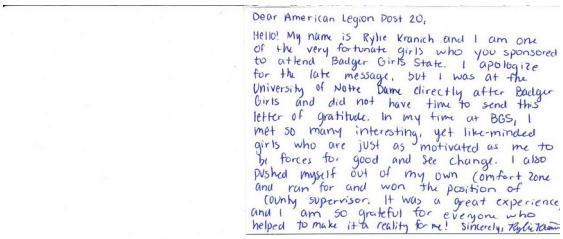
BADGER
BOYS STATE

Dear Legion Post 20,

When I first heard of Badger Boys State, I wasn't sure of the experience I would have. I watched video after video but still thought: Maybe this isn't for me. But now that I have spent my week here, I have had one of the greatest experiences of my life. I have learned from my watching my peers around me what the meaning of true leadership, compassion, and brotherhood should look like. All that I have learned from Badger Boys State is in debt to the support you have given to allow me to attend. Without you, I would have never been able to meet so many new people and grow to the extent that I have. I am truly grateful for your support.

Thanks,
Citizen of Badger Boys State

Badger Boys State — thank-you note

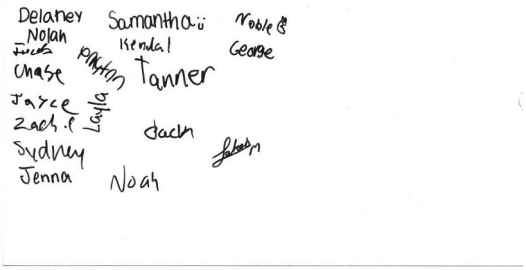


Dear American Legion Post 20,

Hello! My name is Rylie Kranich and I am one of the very fortunate girls who you sponsored to attend Badger Girls State. I apologize for the late message, but I was at the University of Notre Dame directly after Badger Girls and did not have time to send this letter of gratitude. In my time at BGS, I met so many interesting, yet like-minded girls who are just as motivated as me to be forces for good and see change. I also pushed myself out of my own comfort zone and ran for and won the position of County supervisor. It was a great experience and I am so grateful for everyone who helped to make it a reality for me! Sincerely, Rylie Kranich

Badger Girls State — from Rylie Kranich

Waterford Wolverine Shooting Team — thank-you card



Waterford Wolverine Shooting Team — signed by the team