



Strathcona Branch 595

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MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING TUESDAY, JANUARY 26TH, 2016

PRESENT: Comrades Helen Fraser, James Grady, Dave Brush, Sherry Brush, Toula Pouris, Brian Madden, Katherine Winters, Howard Keck, Ken Harrison, Georges Winters, John Carter, Bruce Brown, Marjorie Joly, Ron Sparks, Glenn Bell, Harold Pretty, Janet Waitman, Tom Feeley, Ken Bonell, John Gazeley, Dennis Sirman, Greg Devine, Jim Simpson, Connie Bennett, Mary Smith, Wanda Riddell, John Boyer, Ron Hyslop, Rob Mantle, Wavey Bennett, Eli Bennett, Ray Moloughney

EXCUSED:

ABSENT:

1. **OPENING CEREMONIES AS PER LEGION RITUAL:**

Meeting called to order and opened with the President conducting the "Opening Ritual" at 7:00 pm.

Comrade Dennis Sirman assumed the responsibilities of the Chair for the meeting.

2. **CEREMONY OF ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS:**

MOTION

Comrade Helen Fraser moved to approve the following members and the motion was seconded by Comrade Sherry Brush.

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Denis (Dan) Careau | Ordinary |
| Pierre Pilon | Affiliate |
| Ronald Hyslop | Ordinary |
| Rupert Gleason-Beard | Ordinary |
| Faye Susanne Mady | Affiliate |

CARRIED

Comrade Helen Fraser announced the following new members were present for initiation:

Denis (Dan) Careau – Ordinary

Ronald Hyslop – Ordinary

Richard Turcotte - Ordinary

The Membership Chair, Comrade Helen Fraser, conducted the swearing in ceremony of the above new members after which they were welcomed by the Members.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING:**

The minutes of the last meeting held on November 24th, 2015 were distributed.

MOTION

Moved by Comrade Ken Harrison and seconded by Comrade Howard Keck to accept the minutes as circulated.

CARRIED

4. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

5. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

President, Comrade Dennis Sirman

Looking back over the last 7-8 months your executive has done well. We have reduced Legion losses by more than 50% while offering a full program of events and special activities. We have had major renovation/changes and painted the entire Branch through donations and excellent volunteer effort, the cost was very low. The addition of a new TV for the "99 Greenfield" Lounge was done largely by non-member donations and special raffles so as to not impact the daily operation and expenses to the Branch. The chairs have been replaced at no cost, carpet donated and installed, and our dance floor looks great. A special thanks to Comrade Mary Smith. Her talent for brightening up our hall for any and all occasions, whether it is a seasonal or a special event, is appreciated by all.

Inside it all we have three very active dart teams. A growing Euchre community (thanks to Comrades Betty Brown and Wanda Riddell) playing every Monday and monthly tournaments, Thursday the branch is brightened up with our lively Bowling group whose numbers have seemed to increase substantially. Hall rentals are up and in at least 4 cases, the Branch, through its volunteers, has been able to generate additional revenue through catering. Monthly Brunches have been added and thanks to Comrades Eli Bennett, Wavey Bennett, Ray Moloughney, Connie Bennett, Glenn Bell, Wanda Riddell and Helen Fraser, we having a growing attendance. I can't forget 595 also hosts one of the most attractive golf tournaments, which by the way are sold out almost upon announcement. Its success is thanks to Comrade Greg Devine and his team with their organizational skills and tournament venue.

Our Poppy Campaign was very successful, the Branch Colour Party has been called out on numerous occasions thanks to the efforts of Comrade Martin Maltais. Having a resident Pastor, Comrade Georges Winters, we have seen our hall used for special occasions such as weddings and Celebrations of Life. It is the same person together with Comrades Ron Barrie, Ron Oakley, Ray Ayotte and Ted Latham that have developed a Memorial Service, at Brantwood Gates, that has got City appeal and attended by MPs and MPPs. In fact it's now listed on the City scroll of recognized events.

Our association with Cadets continues to grow as we utilize their numbers to assist us in special events, ceremonies and poppy campaign. Thanks to Comrades Grant Yusak and Georges Winters and their unique fundraising skills we can support them financially without impacting our bottom line. We have also developed a trust fund for supporting Camp Merrywood, again thanks to the initiative of Comrade Grant Yusak. Camp Merrywood has a long history of support from our Branch and remains a priority to many members of 595.

I have had many a compliment about our new look and appeal. I have had the opportunity to meet with District, Zone Leaders and many other Branch executives and received many a compliment for our efforts. Sixteen members represented 595 at the Zone Dart Challenge, with six members moving on to the District Challenge. We were well received and recognized as members purchased their own shirts and could be seen celebrating and playing throughout the venue.

Now it's time to look to the future.

Comrade Greg Devine has booked entertainment to the end of May, we are trying new techniques of combining Dinners with music (Valentines Dance) to see if that can develop additional revenue. Comrade Errol Choo, our newly appointed Sports Officer, is looking to develop a regular dart challenge inviting players from all over the City. Friday dinners, well we are struggling along and definitely could use some assistance here with coordination and planning.

Now the hard news, we continue to exhaust our reserves, volunteers are few and we are relying on a very small core to continue. As to participation by members, my count would show less than 10%. Interest by non-members is event oriented and varies. Bottom line we will not be able to continue for more than a few years at best. Over the past three years we have had separate committees generating thoughtful, insightful, extensive reports and recommendations. We have incorporated many of the recommendations and yet we continue to slip. The cost of renting will not change, we have tried to negotiate a better deal with no success and our other major cost, the salaries, the cost of running the bar ensures we have a limited future.

It is time think of our future, what can we do and when. It is time to empower your executive to investigate and lead 595 into the future. Opportunities such as amalgamation should be tabled and investigated now, while there is time. Seriously pursue volunteer bartenders, a solution for many other Legions, some with great success and others with problems.

We need members to step up and participate in 595's future, we need the membership to discuss and participate on the wellbeing and future of 595.

On amalgamation: there are 10 Legions within the greater Ottawa area, all are having a difficult time of making a go of it. Some have seen their membership drop, others are suffering from lack of participation and even more are sitting on prime real estate and in need of costly repairs. Initiating an open forum to look at what's best for Legion members in near and far future may be one of the only means of survival. I am proud to be from 595 but after 5 years or more of dedication and effort I see it difficult for 595 to be alive and support veterans and seniors in the future. The very time you may need help there may be no one there to provide it. Being a veteran and legionnaire for the rest of our lives means we have to think differently if we are going to be around past 10 years or more. Our government will only provide the basic necessities and the comforts and personal help that the poppy fund and legions provide can only be there if the legion is there. I am not saying this is even possible but it should be investigated.

Volunteer bar/support staff. Having worked with the executive these past years we have trimmed off all the fat, innovated new revenue streams, created additional opportunities but our balance sheet shows one glaring expense that other Branches have been able to eliminate. These past months 4 members of the executive have investigated the opportunity and were unable to come up with an implementation plan. Volunteer bar staff has worked successfully in many legions and of course has

failed miserably in others. I would like to create an open forum on discussion and investigation on this issue. We know the road blocks, we need people to think creatively on how to overcome them. I need a mandate to implement and seriously pursue this avenue, and of course a group of serious members willing to participate.

MOTION

Moved by Comrade Dennis Sirman and seconded by Comrade Katherine Winters that the President has the support of the general members to investigate amalgamation and/or volunteer bartenders, form a committee from the Membership (not Executive) and report back to the general meeting on the viability of both solutions be approved.

CARRIED

Comrade Dave Brush requested that a review sheet be produced showing recommended changes and which were implemented. Comrade Sirman agreed to provide same.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT: Comrade John Carter

The financial statements for the period ending December 31st 2015 were presented and a copy is attached to the Branch and Secretary's copies.

7. CORRESPONDENCE AND BUSINESS ARISING THEREFROM:

None

8. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

(a) Bar - Comrade Helen Fraser

All is running smoothly.

(b) Entertainment – Comrade Greg Devine

Comrade Devine reported all going well and advised entertainment will begin at 6:30 pm instead of 7 pm on Friday evenings. Comrade Waitman requested that the volume be lowered.

(c) Sports and Track and Field – Comrade Errol Choo

No report.

(d) House - Comrade Glenn Bell

Comrade Bell reported ladies' toilet has been repaired.

(e) Hall Rentals – Wanda Riddell

Comrade Riddell reported rental Feb. 27, 7 to 12, March 6, 1 to 5 - waiting on confirmation, March 16, 7 to 12, April 1 waiting on confirmation. April 3, April 16 and April 30 are booked. May is fully booked.

(f) Training and Organizational Development - Comrade Tom Feeley

No report.

(g) Communications, Public Relations and Publicity - Comrade Mary Smith

Comrade Smith reported she continues to send out newsletter and advertises as asked for upcoming events.

- (h) **Membership - Comrade Helen Fraser**
As at January 24th, 2016: Total Membership – 347

| STATUS | # RECORDS |
|----------|-----------|
| PAID UP | 266 |
| LAPSED 1 | 54 |
| LAPSED 2 | 27 |
| TOTALS | 347 |

Comrade Fraser reported she sent out renewal reminders by email and regular mail to those who do not have email early January.

Per capita tax sent to Dominion Command since last General Meeting \$2,460.12.

- (i) **Poppy – Comrades Martin Maltais/Brian Madden**
Comrade Madden reported he continues to attend Poppy Fund meetings. Thanked members for distribution of Christmas gifts. Comrade Winters spoke regarding a retirement home that requested attendance by the Legion. He agreed to give particulars to Comrade Ken Harrison who will investigate.
- (j) **Honours and Awards - Comrade Brian Madden**
No report.
- (k) **Veterans' Services - Comrade Georges Winters**
Comrade Winters reported that the Provincial Command Service Office will be in attendance at the Branch the week of February 15th. Anyone wishing an appointment is to contact Comrade Winters.
- (l) **Legion Seniors – Tom Feeley**
No report.
- (m) **Branch Regulations - Comrade Dennis Sirman**
No report.
- (n) **Youth Education and Bursary - Comrade Bruce Brown/Comrade Brian Madden**
Comrade Brown reported on January 9, 2016 the awards ceremony for the Remembrance Day contests was held at Strathcona. All winners were present with their respective families. Over seventy people were in attendance. The cost breakdown for the awards contest is attached. Photos of the ceremony are posted on the website.

Three of the first place winners in Strathcona's contest placed at the Zone G5 level. An awards ceremony will be held for the Zone G 5 winners, including the three winners from Strathcona, on February 28 at Orleans Branch.

The Public Speaking Contest will be held on Saturday March 5 at Barrhaven Legion. Information packages are being sent to the schools in Strathcona's boundary.

(o) **Ways & Means - Comrade Tom Feeley**

Comrade Feeley reported there will be a yard sale held at the Branch on May 14th, 2016 and confirmed there will also be a bake sale that day.

(p) **Kitchen Services - Comrade Wavey Bennett**

No report.

(q) **Cadet Liaison – Vacant**

No report.

9. **MOTION TO ACCEPT ALL REPORTS**

Moved by Comrade Dave Brush and seconded by Comrade Ray Moloughney that all reports be accepted. **Motion carried.**

10. **GENERAL AND NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

11. **TABLING OF NOTICES OF MOTION**

None.

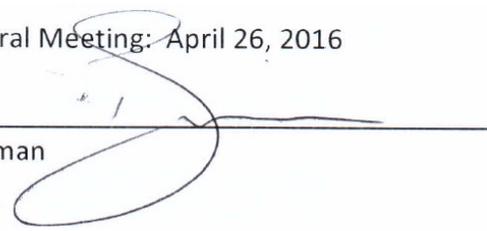
12. **MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT:**

At 7:56 pm Comrade Martin Maltais, Branch Chair, declared the business of the meeting having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned.

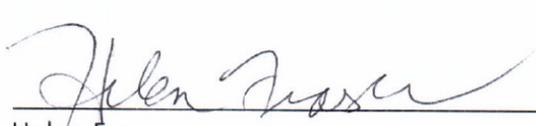
13. **CLOSING CEREMONY:**

Comrade Dennis Sirman conducted the "Closing Ritual".

Next General Meeting: April 26, 2016



Dennis Sirman
President



Helen Fraser
Secretary

January, April, June, September, October, November