



## Post 552

# American Legion Meeting Minutes

18 December 2025

Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 pm

Officers Present: (Note absences)

Commander	Doug Benzel	
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice	Bill Marsh	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice	Mike Hill	
Adjutant	Dave Schmidt	
Finance Officer	Kent Van Horn	
Chaplain	Bill Bartle	Absent
Service Officer	Dave Schmidt	
Sergeant-At-Arms	Jim Vander Ploeg	
Public Affairs Off.	Carlos Bazua	
Asst. Adjutant	Bill Heard	

**Guests:** Scarlett Winter, Mission Bay High School, Community Service Project, Matt Winter, Linda Schmidt, Duane Moore.

Other members: Six other members attended the meeting.

Minutes from the November: Approved

### Committee Reports:

#### Finance Report:

Finance Officer Kent Van Horn reported that Post's checking account balance for the end of the period was \$3,760.34. He noted that the Post will need to make a payment in January to register and support the delegates to Boys/Girls State. He added that the Post should

make additional donations to various organizations in the next quarter. Looking at the financial records, he said the Post is in “fine shape.”

#### Membership:

Adjutant Dave Schmidt said that as of 12 December, the post had reached 68.57 percent of its goal of 140 members, with 96 members enrolled. The District percentage is 71.7 percent. He has sent out renewal letters to 72 members so far, and plans to send out several more. We are preparing a letter to send to Post 1000 members in the area, in an attempt to get them to transfer to Post 552.

#### Boy Scout Troop 271 and Boys State:

BSA Liaison Bill Heard reported that he and his wife attended the Troop 271 annual Christmas party on 16 December. Some 50 boys and parents attended the party. The Scouts cooked the entire meal, which was very good. The main activity was a gingerbread house building contest. The Troop leadership has been invited to make a presentation at the Post’s January meeting. An update on the flag has been requested.

2nd Vice Mike Hill suggested a possible competition next year between Troop 271 and Troop 506 sponsored by the VFW Post involving the VFW’s Voice of Democracy Scholarship project.

Kent Van Horn noted that the delegate selection period for Boys State is 10 January to 15 February. He asked for volunteers to conduct interviews with Boys State. Brian Compton, Mike Hill, and Dave Schmidt volunteered to assist Kent with the interviews. The deadline for submission of candidates to the program is Feb. 15. The deadline for submission of delegate packets is 15 March. Boys/Girls State is scheduled for 19-27 June in Sacramento. The total cost for sponsoring three delegates will be \$2,580 and the Post has budgeted \$2,630 for the project. The VFW is contributing \$860.

#### Sick Call:

Chaplain Bill Bartle remains on the sick list. He would appreciate phone calls from any Post member. He is doing somewhat better and appreciates phone calls from friends.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

1st Vice Bill Marsh reported that the next Bingo event is set for Sunday, 21 December, from 2:30 to 5 p.m. There will be a \$20 charge for five game cards. There also will be a 50-50 Raffle. The Bingo game will have gift card prizes totaling \$300.

### **New Business:**

Public Affairs Officer Carlos Bazua reported that he has placed Post 552 on Facebook and Instagram and has updated the Post website. He suggested including testimonials from members about the Post and its activities to increase interest in the Post. He is looking for ways to streamline and simplify the Legion application and payment methods. The Post website has been renewed for 2 years.

Presentation by Scarlett Winter:

Ms. Winter described the project to erect a new Welcome sign to showcase the emblems of non-profit organizations, including Post 552, near the Northern entrance to Pacific Beach, just off the I-5 exit on Mission Bay Drive near the In 'n Out and military housing. The sign actually will be on military housing land. King's Cross Church volunteers made the sign structure on which the emblems will be displayed. The sign is expected to be in place in late January or early February.

Brian Compton offered a motion for the Post to pay for an 18-inch diameter American Legion Post 552 emblem at a cost not to exceed \$250. Kent Van Horn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Bill Marsh offered a motion to donate \$300 for construction of the sign structure. Mike Hill seconded and the motion passed with 1 vote opposed.

### **Good of the American Legion:**

Commander Benzel announced that the Post will host the District 22 Board meeting at 10 a.m., Saturday, 14 March, 2025. He expects 15-20 people to attend.

Mike Hill noted that the Post needs a new 3x5 Navy flag to replace the current flag. The new flag would be flown indoors. He also proposed a Christmas Escape the Insanity Party for Saturday, December 20, from 3-7 p.m., that would include an ugly sweater context. Christmas drinks would be available in the canteen.

Bill Marsh said a sign protesting the construction of the high-rise apartment building proposed for the French Gourmet site had been placed in front of the Post. He said a letter protesting the construction has been addressed to San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria.

Gabe Rowin showed the VFW t-shirts he is selling. He informed us that the Legion can also have t-shirts made to sell at the post.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

/s/Signed December 22, 2025

Adjutant Dave Schmidt