



CHARLES E. MURRAY AMERICAN LEGION POST 186

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Meeting of the General Membership – March 6, 2025

Sergeant-At-Arms: Secures the Meeting Room

Meeting Called to Order: The Commander calls the meeting to order.

Members in attendance: 26

Guests in attendance: 4 Auxiliary Members, Auxiliary President Joanne Holobinka
1 Special Guest Speaker, Ellen Paul (Hernando Hope)

Hand Salute

Opening Prayer: Chaplain Joe LaRosa delivered the invocation.

POW/MIA Empty Chair: Acknowledgment deferred due to time constraints, but the significance and remembrance remain honored in spirit.

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by 1st Vice Commander Moriarty.

Preamble: Recited by all members in attendance

Commander: Officially declared meeting convened

Roll Call of Officers

Commander	Pat Sharpe	PRESENT
1st Vice Commander	Tom Moriarty **	PRESENT
2nd Vice Commander	Jim Sales	PRESENT
Finance Officer	Mike Cray **	PRESENT
Post Adjutant *	Jeff Rogers	PRESENT
PR/Historian	VACANT	N/A
Sergeant-at-Arms	Kent Hogeland	PRESENT
Chaplain *	Joe LaRosa	PRESENT
Judge Advocate *	Keith Hines **	PRESENT
Post Service Officer *	Eric Hollinger	PRESENT
Past Commander	Don St. Pierre	PRESENT

Roll Call of E-Board (7 Members):

Jeff Conlan	PRESENT	Tom McCain	PRESENT
Dave Crofut	PRESENT	Howard Smith	PRESENT
Rich Juneau	PRESENT	Eric Hollinger **	PRESENT
		Ann Mytnik **	PRESENT

Roll Call of Managers / Committee Chairs

Office Manager	Sue Moriarty	PRESENT
Canteen Manager	Kelly Acker	PRESENT
House Committee Chair	Terry O'Brien	PRESENT

* Non-Voting Officer/Member of the E-Board

** To be confirmed at General Membership Meeting

Quorum Verified?

YES

Special Guest Speaker – Ellen Paul, Founder & CEO of Hernando Hope

Ellen Paul addressed the General Membership as the founder and CEO of Hernando Hope, a local nonprofit dedicated to supporting the homeless population in Hernando County, including many veterans. She shared that Hernando Hope operates as a no-judgment, empathy-driven organization that prioritizes helping individuals regain stability and dignity through services such as obtaining identification and accessing housing (including tents when necessary), food, and essential items. Ms. Paul has personally identified over 100 previously uncounted homeless individuals through her volunteer work with the county's headcount program and emphasized the gap between official statistics and the visible reality.

She described ongoing partnerships with organizations such as St. Vincent de Paul, CARES, and the VA. She noted the urgent need for community volunteers to step in as mentors or advocates—particularly for homeless Veterans within walking distance of the Post—who are reluctant or unable to seek help independently. Ms. Paul shared powerful examples of the challenges many face, including one Navy Veteran who is at risk of losing his housing due to difficulty finding employment.

Her message closed with a call to action: to be aware, to engage, and to remember that often, all it takes to change a life is a little bit of hope—and someone who cares. Members were encouraged to take her card and consider supporting Hernando Hope's mission in any way they can.

Confirmation of New Officers/E-Board Members: Per Article V, Section 4 of the Post Bylaws, Commander-appointed positions were presented to the membership and approved by a majority vote following confirmation by the Executive Board.

- Tom Moriarty – 1st Vice Commander
- Mike Cray – Finance Officer
- Keith Hines – Judge Advocate
- Eric Hollinger – E-Board
- Ann Mytnik – E-Board

Approval of Minutes: Adjutant Jeff Rogers presented the following meeting minutes for approval:

- February 6, 2025 – General Membership Meeting
- February 12, 2025 – First Special E-Board Meeting
- February 18, 2025 – Second Special E-Board Meeting
- February 27, 2025 – E-Board Meeting

A motion to accept these meeting minutes, as written and without discussion, was made by Don St. Pierre and **seconded by** Eric Hollinger. **Motion Passed.**

Correspondence Review: None to Report

Officers' Reports:

1. Commander:

Pat Sharpe deferred most topics to the upcoming E-Board meeting due to the full agenda. Items, including reinstatement requests and potential Sunday closures, will be addressed then. Members were encouraged to consider these matters in the interim.

2. 1st Vice Commander:

Tom Moriarty reports that membership currently stands at 863 paid members, representing 82.4% of the goal. Seven new members signed up during a recent membership day, and thanks are extended to Jeff Rogers for his assistance. During the discussion, Jeff Rogers indicated he would

create a post on the Post Facebook page with contact information for membership inquiries: FLpost186@gmail.com. Members are encouraged to use this email for a faster response.

3. 2nd Vice Commander:

Jim Sales reported on the progress of a new charter, noting that he has 12 people interested in the project. He is currently working on coordinating the group and has spoken with others about potential assistance. Jim plans to reach out to finalize the group and is preparing to assemble the charter. Keith Hines confirmed that he would help Jim with the charter preparation process.

4. Post Adjutant:

Jeff Rogers reported on the website and social media presence. He noted that the website is performing well and has received positive feedback. Jeff is working to consolidate the post's Facebook pages into a single central page to reduce confusion. He emphasized the positive comments about the website and announcements and is committed to updating the event calendar. Jeff expressed appreciation for the support he has received in managing these communications.

5. Finance Officer:

Mike Cray presented the financial report, highlighting key financial metrics for the month: Income sources included approximately \$17,800 from gambling machines and \$22,000 from kitchen and bar sales, totaling around \$44,000. After accounting for cost of goods for the kitchen and bar (about \$14,000), the profit was reduced to \$30,000. Additional expenses brought the total expenses to around \$28,000, resulting in a net profit of just over \$1,000 for the month. Mike noted this was a preliminary report and more detailed information would be forthcoming.

A motion to approve the Finance Report as reported was made by Tom Moriarty and **seconded** by Jeff Conlan. **Motion passed.**

6. Judge Advocate: Nothing to Report

7. Post Service Officer:

Eric Hollinger reported on the recent stake shoots, describing the latest Saturday event as an "outstanding day" with positive results. He received 14 phone calls from veterans and spouses seeking assistance, most of whom were referred to county services. Eric visited a rehabilitation center and helped a veteran notarize some documents, during which the veteran's family made a \$40 cash donation. He promptly wrote a check for this donation and submitted it to the finance officer. Eric also mentioned maintaining various office hours to aid Veterans.

8. Chaplain: Nothing to Report

9. Sergeant-at-Arms: Nothing to Report

10. House Committee Chair: Nothing to Report

11. Office Manager: Nothing to Report

12. Canteen Manager:

Kelly Acker's report was brief yet positive. She announced that the kitchen had passed its inspection. She also mentioned that they are working on updating the handheld menus and noted some discussions about the current menu offerings. Kelly acknowledged that, while they occasionally run specials like pasta night, they strive to vary the menu to prevent customer fatigue. She indicated that they are in the process of updating both their menu and point-of-sale system.

Old Business:

Election Process Review & Nominations

The first round of officer and Executive Board nominations for the upcoming election was held. Election Committee Member Keith Hines reminded the membership that we are operating under the 2018 Post 186 Constitution and Bylaws. He reviewed eligibility requirements, particularly for the position of Commander, which requires at least one year of prior service as a Post officer or

Executive Board member. However, this requirement may be waived by a vote conducted by the E&N Committee Chairman, and approval of two-thirds of the members present at a regular membership meeting held within 90 days of the election, as outlined in Article V, Section 3 of the bylaws.

Sergeant-at-Arms: Kent Hogeland was nominated and accepted the nomination.

Chaplain: Joe LaRosa was nominated but respectfully declined due to prior commitments. No other nominations were made at this time.

Historian: No nominations were made. The position remains open.

Executive Board: The following members were nominated and accepted nomination:

Eric Hollinger	Geno Darcy	Dave Crofut	Jeff Conlan
Annie Mytnik	Tom McCain	Howard Smith	Jeff Rogers

NOTE: Seven members are to be elected to the E-Board. As of this round, eight individuals have been nominated and accepted. Additional nominations and clarification may occur in upcoming rounds.

Finance Officer: Mike Cray was nominated and accepted.

House Committee (3 Members): Terry O'Brien was nominated and accepted.

NOTE: Two of the three House Committee seats remain open for nomination.

2nd Vice Commander: Jim Sales was initially nominated but declined. Gary Giambrone was then nominated and accepted.

1st Vice Commander: Tom Moriarty was nominated and accepted.

Commander: Pat Sharpe was nominated and accepted.

Keith Hines closed the first round by reminding the membership that two more nomination rounds will follow. Members unable to attend the election may request an absentee ballot after the final nomination round, with ballots to be mailed and returned ahead of the May 28 election date.

New Business:

- **Reinstatement Requests:** Several reinstatement requests were acknowledged. Due to the volume of items on the agenda, these were tabled for discussion at the next Executive Board meeting.
- **Lotto Program Discontinuation:** It was reported that the Post is losing money on the current Lotto program due to low sales volume and staffing costs. A **motion** to discontinue Lotto was made by Keith Hines and **seconded by** Jeff Rogers. **Motion Passed.** Final details regarding ticket buybacks and machine removal will be coordinated.
- **Entertainment Hours:** An update was shared confirming that all Saturday night entertainment is run from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM, as approved by the Executive Board.
- **Cover Charge for Saturday Night Bands:** There was extensive discussion regarding implementing a \$2–\$3 cover charge to help offset entertainment costs. Suggestions included using wristbands to distinguish paying attendees and waiving the charge for members. No final decision was reached; the matter was tabled for further discussion at the next General Membership or E-Board meeting.

- **Purchase of a New Safe:** Commander Sharpe reported that the cost of safes has significantly increased due to tariffs. A final recommendation was deferred pending further research on pricing and availability.
- **Replacement of Outdoor Sign:** Concerns were raised about the malfunctioning exterior sign, which is only operational about 40% of the time. Jeff Rogers offered to obtain a quote for a possible replacement. Members discussed whether a vendor-sponsored sign might be an option.
- **Sunday Operations Discussion:** Given the high daily operational cost (estimated at \$1,100/day), members discussed the financial viability of remaining open on Sundays during the slower summer months. No motion was made, and the matter was tabled for further review by the E-Board.
- **Vendor Advertising and Donation:** Members discussed the potential to engage local and national vendors (e.g., Coca-Cola) for advertising support or in-kind donations. It was suggested that letters be prepared to request contributions in exchange for tax-deductible receipts.

For the Good of the Legion:

The next E-Board meeting will be on March 27, 2025, at 4:00 pm.

The next General Meeting will be on April 3, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

Closing Ceremony:

Closing Prayer: Chaplain Joe LaRosa delivered the closing prayer.

Hand Salute

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey G. Rogers
Post Adjutant