

Merchantville Lodge No. 119, F. A. M.
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MINUTES of the Regular Communication for September 11, 2025 AD, 6025 AL

A Regular communication of Merchantville Lodge #119, F&AM was held. The Lodge was opened on the MASTER MASON DEGREE in DUE and ANCIENT Form at 7:45PM with the indicated installed OFFICERS in their regular stations and places

WM: Luis A. Valentin, PM X

X – Indicates PRESENT

SW:	Andrew S. Knaus, PM		JW:	Anthony J. Starkus, PM	
TR:	David K. Martin, Jr, PM		SEC:	Shawn M. Roberts, PM	X
SD:	El Donaldo F. Vid Al, PM	X	JD:	Rev. Jorge A Martinez, PM	X
SMC:	Luis Francisco Ruiz		JMC:	Gerald D. Jeitner, PM	x
SS:	David R. Saunders		JS:	Joseph M. McGuckin, Jr	X
CHP:	Raynaldo Santiago, PM	X	MLS:	Christian P. Kochon, PM	x
TYL:	DB Enrique Rosario, PM	x	HST:	David K. Martin, Jr, PM	

Filling in were: DWB Rosario Marshal, WB Eric Johnson SW, WB Gerald Jeitner JW, RW James Choyinski Tyler

Members Present (21)

Bro William DeFoney, Bro Mark Valentine, Bro Chas Van Horn, Bro Frank Ritter, DB Stephen Callghan, Bro Michael Passio, WB Tom Smith, WB Rick Emory, WB Gary Jones, Bro Alexander Perry

After the Salute to the Flag and Pledge of Allegiance, brethren remained at attention during a moment of silence in respect of those lost during the September 11, 2001, attacks. DWB Rosario then led the Lodge in the National Anthem.

Greetings from the Worshipful Master

WM Luis A Valentin asked all current or Past Grand Staff to introduce themselves - RW James Choyinski
Past Masters - WB Shawn Roberts, WB Raynaldo Santiago, WB Enrique Rosario, WB Gerald Jeitner, WB Christian Kochon, WB Rick Emory, WB Tom Smith, WB Gary Jones, WB Eric Johnson, WB El Donaldo Vidal, WB James Choyinski, WB Jorge Martinez.

Distinguished Brothers – DB Enrique Rosario, DB Stephen Callaghan, DB James Choyinski

Visitors - Bro. Corem Joseph from Keystone 135

He then thanked those who were filling in officer seats. There were many.

Reading of Minutes

A motion was made by Brother Chaplain to dispense of the reading of the minutes and accept as distributed, which was Seconded by Brother Junior Warden. The motion passed.

Reading of Bills

None over budgetary items

Reading of Treasurer's Report

Treasurer being absent, the secretary scrambled to find the account balance and the investment balances.

Monetary balances redacted from printable minutes.

Ordered to place on file for the audit committee.

Reading of the necessary Correspondence

Grand Master's Night at the Races, Grand Lodge Annual Communication @ Tropicana November 4-6. Masonic Leadership Conference.

Reading of Petitions and or Balloting

A request for demit was received and read from Bro Jeffrey Pennel.
A unanimous hand ballot was taken and demit approved.

Committee Reports

Sick and Distressed

Bro Secretary spoke with Bro David Millspaugh who was in the hospital and in rehab for 7 weeks with a broken femur and other ailments, but is now home and using a walker to get around.
Bro Van Horn has been visiting RW Mark Richardson and offered to take anyone who would be interested in going with him. Mark is restricted to a bed, cannot use his hands but he is quite sharp and looks well otherwise.
WB Martinez and his wife Luz have visited RW Ray Taylor to give him communion and he says hello to everyone.
WB Jeitner visited WB Olsen in IL and is planning to go out again on the 24th.
WM asked WB Santiago about his son, and he said he is still doing the chemo and is hanging in there.
RW Choyinski said that his son, Bro James Choyinski's wife will be having a baby in November.
WB Rosario's Sister In Law has stage 3 melanoma, the Chemo is done and so far she is doing ok.

Square Club

None

Blood Drive

Next Blood Drive to be held at the Haddonfield temple on November 15th from 9am to 2pm

Rental\Building

Thank you to all who came to the work days where the striping was done on the parking lot, and the shed was cleaned out into a dumpster. We will need another cleanout day with a dumpster for the inside.
Repaired one vacuum, Replaced one vacuum, Cleaned out and reorganized storage space, Repaired old defibrillator - needs to be mounted, Repaired back door, Installed new first aid kit in kitchen, Met with Merchantville ladies club and got them setup in the building, Met fire inspector - on Monday 9/8

Trustees

None

Merger and Consolidations

Pushed to new business

Membership

None

Old Business

No old business at this time

New Business

Need to replace the roof on the shed. Motion made by WB Roberts to allot \$1000 for the shingles, 2nd by WB Rosario, passed unanimously.
Next dumpster day needs to happen.
Trunk or Treat on October 25th at 2pm.

Merger and consolidation:

The letter of proposal of consolidation was read to the brethren again by WB Roberts. The instructions on how to vote were addressed. $\frac{3}{4}$ written vote with a judge and 2 tellers, every member present must vote. Write YES if for, write NO if against, any other writings on the ballot will invalidate the ballot.

Motion to move forward with consolidation was made by WB Roberts, 2nd by WB Johnson.

Discussion:

WB Tom Smith called to delay for 2 months, had not known anything about the consolidation until the summons. Discussed other traditions where those must be asked to help and will never reach out to the master on their own. Not at all in favor of merging with Mozart Lodge, changing the day of the meeting or the name of the lodge. RW Choyinski said we joined a fraternity, not a lodge and that bringing in Mozart Lodge is not a bad thing.

WB Roberts expressed his feelings on the matter as the chair of the committee and the dire straits that the officer line is currently in and that without a change, there will not be a lodge at all very soon. Every month we express the need for help in the trestleboard with no response, except for one time, when a brother asked what he could do, was given the Ladie's night event to organize people for, and when he discovered that the same people every day are the only ones doing things, sent a letter of demit, which was ready at the beginning of this meeting, that was Bro Jeffrey Pennel. Things are not getting better, delaying it will make it worse. At least we have the option to do things on our terms now, rather than Grand Lodge stepping in and making things happen on their terms, or worse, shutting the lodge down.

WB Johnson expressed his feelings as a committee member, and how in 2018 while he was master, there was a change where we could tell then things needed to change. We have poor attendance at lodge meetings, events, and we're falling apart. The consolidation was well thought out and researched.

Bro Alex Perry, WB Tom Smith and Bro Mark Valentin, DB Stephen Callaghan all expressed that they would like to see this tabled for 2 months to meet the brothers of Mozart, get information on their financials and see what we can do to make it a better situation.

WM stated that we have had events in conjunction with Mozart Lodge throughout the year which were opportunities to meet these brothers, which were all announced in the trestleboards.

WB Roberts then withdrew his motion. Delaying until November pushes it past the Grand Lodge Annual, and it needs to be done prior to that to be completed for 2026. Would recommend doing this in October. Also leaves time to decide if the warrant may need to be surrendered.

A motion was made by DB Rosario, 2nd by WB Martinez to table the vote until the October meeting. 18 for 3 against.

October's meeting will be October 9th, 2025 at 7:30pm and we will have dinner prior, at 6:30.

WM expressed that DLI is on October 8th and they can come meet the members of Mozart then if not before. Mozart also meets every month on the 1st Tuesdays at 7:30, dinner always at 6:30.

Birthdays and Masonic Birthdays

No Masonic birthdays in attendance. WB Kochon and WB Jones had birthday birthdays. Happy birthday was sang (semi-poorly)

Lodge Closing

Closed in due and ancient form at 9:40pm with the officers in stations and places.

Attest:

WB Shawn M. Roberts, PM

Secretary

Merchantville Lodge #119, F&AM