



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

## VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

### Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2024

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Conducted by all attendees.

**Attendance:** In attendance – Paul Cancelliere, Dave Mangan (VSO), Rob Ettinger, Dan Benjamin (and Lois), Dale Findlay, Marc Young, , Joe Dellolio, Marion Dennehy, Chris Olsen

Absent: Kristi Yentile, Bill Curran

Review/Approval of February Meeting Minutes-vote required: **Motion by Dale, to approve February minutes, and second by Joe. The vote was unanimous for approval.**

**Members of the Public may Speak:** no one in attendance.

**VSO March 2024 Report and Veterans Coffee:** The Veterans monthly food and dry goods support program will be held tomorrow Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, behind the senior center. Twenty-seven applicants received food selections from the Greater Boston Food bank assembled by volunteers from Wakefield and the surrounding communities of Stoneham, Saugus, Melrose, North Andover, and the Melrose fire Dept.

As I have mentioned and reiterated in the past, that:

- If any Veteran, spouse, or immediate family member of a Veteran would like to participate in this program, and to be included in the drive thru and pick up, please call our office for further information 781-246-6377 or email at [dmangan@wakefield.ma.us](mailto:dmangan@wakefield.ma.us)
- The Wakefield Elks lodge #1276 held a breakfast for Veterans last Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup> at 10 am and donated \$4,000 for the Wakefield Veterans relief fund bringing our total to date to \$16,000. The turnout was excellent with over 70 participants. Elks invest in their communities through programs that help children grow up healthy and drug-free, meet the needs of today's Veterans, and improve the quality of life.
- We were fortunate to have the Veteran who we elected to give the financial support to last month for her oil delivery instead, fall into the category for the “LEO” program. *LEO's Fuel Assistance program* assists low-income households in Lynn, Lynnfield, Nahant, Saugus, Swampscott, and **Wakefield** by subsidizing and accessing discounts for participants.

### CHAPTER 115

As I have mentioned each month Under Chapter 115 of Massachusetts General Laws the Commonwealth provides a uniform program of financial and medical assistance for veterans and their dependents.

Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel, and medical care on a monthly basis in accordance with a formula that takes into consideration the



number of dependents and income from all sources. For those on a Medical only category, prescription drugs are reimbursed, and if they qualify for MassHealth buy in, we can assist in getting the application.

If a Veteran or the spouse of a Veteran or family member wishes to apply for the Veterans DD 214 (discharge documents) if they enlisted in Massachusetts active duty, my office is capable of retrieving it or can submit the documents to the National Records Center. In many cases the document is required for many of the benefits through the VA. Including chapter 115.

#### Veteran Relief Fund

The Veteran Relief fund now has a balance of \$16,000 and can be made available to Wakefield Veterans, Veteran families or Spouses of surviving Veterans who fall into or become financially strapped and need a one-time assist for reasonable financial help. The requirement is they will need to submit prior three-month bank statements, (savings statements included) information on any investment holdings that are redeemable, and the invoice or need for the assistance. The advisory board will need to vote on the disbursement to establish the release of funds.

For appointments for Veteran Services, please contact me with any questions you may have regarding on-going benefits or submission of new benefits. We are located downstairs / rear entrance at the Senior Center 30 Converse St. Wakefield and is by appointment only.

Veteran Services hours of operation:

Monday, Wed. & Thursday. 8 am – 2 pm

Holidays on Monday hours will be Tues. Wed. and Thursday 8 am -2 pm

Voice mail is checked seven days a week at: 781-246-6377.

#### **Items for Discussion:**

- Down to one VAB openings on the board - encourage others to apply – we will discuss Officer positions (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary) at the April meeting.
- Firing detail – ceremonial cannon – Dale looking for formal approval from the Board to work with Sam Stella (and an unnamed 2<sup>nd</sup>/or 3<sup>rd</sup>) to execute the detail – Need rifles and blanks (21x3 blanks) – Dale to draft a letter – Dale to pursue cannon use with Reading Rifle Club (will still need to work with Wakefield Fire Dept) – Dan to also pursue potential cannon use from Ian at WCAT
- Request submitted (DD Form 2536 – Request for Armed Sources Participation in Public Event – Non-Aviation) – Chris to follow-up on documentation submission
  - Platoon – members of the Armed Forces service members to assist with educating the public about military service
  - 2 military vehicles
  - Ceremonial cannon – M105 Howitzer – lower common placement?

#### **Upcoming events:**

- Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary – March 29, 2024

- D-Day Normandy 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary June 6, 2024
- Monday, May 27, 2024, Memorial Day, at 1:00pm, at the War Memorial on the Upper Common
- June 2024 Flag Day, Friday, June 14, 2024, at 6:00pm at the War Memorial on the Upper Common
- June 21, 2024, Change of Command of the Commander of the USS Constitution
- Purple Heart Day - Wednesday, August 7, 2024
- Town Day – Saturday, 9/21/2024 (rain date 9/22/2024) – VAB usually has a table at Town Day – we should ask for a recruiting table for Army, MC and Navy
- Date TBD in 2025 – commissioning of USS Massachusetts nuclear submarine – Boston, MA
- Re-dedication of Soldiers and Sailors monument – likely to be ready in 2024, prior to Veteran’s Day – Paul to work with Nancy from Historical Society, likely to organize a committee, to plan a ceremony and decide whether to do in 2024, or in April 2025 for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War

#### **Member’s Report “around the horn”:**

- Communications and social media – excellent post on the history of the Americal Division and the connection to the Americal Civic Center
- Dan mentioned \$150k AFRA funding secured for a new facility in the space of the Bread Shop – also mentioned WAA mobile museum that could come to Wakefield/Reading in 2024
- Secretary’s report
  - Space for Memorial Day and Flay Day reserved with town – Rob to update Wakefield Community Calendar for the events in this agenda
- Vice-chair’s report – Marion mentioned various projects she is doing in support of the troops (care packages, etc) in April, June and September – looking for participants
- Chair’s Report
  - *Memorial Day Invitations:*
    - *Paul and Dave think a diplomat speaking about Vietnam today (50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Vietnam) would be a great guest speaker*
    - *Chaplain*
    - *Requested: WMHS Music Director – Chorus/Soloist National Anthem and Buglers “TAPS”*
    - *Requested: WCAT Support*
    - *Requested: Wakefield Fire Department – Bell – tribute for the fallen*
    - *Seek 8 readers - Readers of the Fallen*
    - *Requested: Boy Scout Troop 701 - Color Guard*
    - *Requested: Wakefield Girl Scouts – Wreath*

**Town Council Liaison's comments:** none (not present)

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, April 23, 2024, at 6:30pm via Zoom - Town has offered hybrid meeting locations with video accessibility for CY 2024.

**Matters Not Anticipated for Agenda (Any Voting matters not anticipated necessitating action by the Veterans Advisory Board)** - none

**Adjournment (motion to adjourn):** Motion to adjourn by Marion, seconded by Joe to adjourn. The vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Rob Ettinger, Secretary, VAB