



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

## VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

### Meeting Minutes – March 16, 2021

Meeting Attendees – Dan Benjamin, Paul Cancelliere, Melinda Cook, Rob Ettinger, Sean McGrath Jackie Millinor, Jay Pinette, Kristi Yentile, Michael Owen, Marion Denehy, VSO Dave Mangan

Absent: Rick Pearson, Brian McCoubrey

**Item 1: Call to order:** Chairman Pinette called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM

**Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance:** conducted by all attendees

**Item 3: Review/Approval of February 2021 VAB Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Jay, and second by Melinda to approve the February meeting minutes. Vote was unanimous.

**Item 4: VSO Report:** from VSO Dave Mangan – Food bank for Wakefield is Wednesday March 17<sup>th</sup> Happy St. Patrick's Day. Wakefield food pantry has donated dry goods to go along with the Boston Food Bank donations. We currently have 19 recipients. We currently have 14 recipients on the Chapter 115 program in Wakefield one new participant. Re-certifications for 2021 chapter 115 clients are processed still waiting on acceptance from authorizer for a few of them. Kristi Yentile and I went out last Saturday and added an additional 5 retailers from Water St. to the Veteran Discount program. Flags for Memorial Day have been purchased and stored away Thank you Karen Burke and Jay Pinette. Got a call from a concerned citizen whose uncle Gerald Scott, and two other Korean war veterans Edward Muse, and Richard Marson who have a memorial bronze tablet dedication at the High school on Farm Street for making the ultimate sacrifice during the war. They wondered can it be cleaned perhaps through a grant and reinstated when the new High School is built and not sent to the middle school but remain at the high school in Memoriam as it was when dedicated by the Prisoners of War Committee of Wakefield back in 1955.

For those Veterans seeking out enrollment in the VA health care system for vaccinations at the various centers around Boston VA facilities they are accepting all ages at this time but once again they must be enrolled in the VA health care system. For the Wakefield community they can call my office and arrange for a one on one meeting to fill out the forms and I will send them along to the VA. With the stress and strain on Veterans mental health from the isolation as a result of COVID the coordinator for the Greater Boston has provided us with an outreach. For any mental health information at VA Boston please contact Kyle Toto at [kyle.toto@va.gov](mailto:kyle.toto@va.gov) and he will help point you in the right direction. Suicide hot line 1 800-273-8255. Motion by Jay, and second by Jackie to accept the VSOs report. Vote was unanimous.

**Item 5: Veteran's Corner Article:** Jay did not receive any feedback from folks in town on the introductory Veteran's Corner article that appeared in the Daily Item on Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. For the March 26<sup>th</sup> article, we are resubmitting the letter from last year on Vietnam Veterans Day, which is March 29<sup>th</sup>. In addition to the article we will add the names and pictures of the five veterans from Wakefield who lost their lives in Vietnam. The Board discussed perhaps having a local ceremony for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemorative, with lapel pins and certificates. Jay said we should have local Vietnam veterans reach out to the VSO. We will



consolidate a list of those interested and go from there. Dave will also reach out to Barbara at WCAT to see if they would air the DVD in the back of the Honor and Remember book on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Item 6: Wakefield Veterans Discount Program Update:** VSO Mangan provided an update, along with Kristi. The current list has 55 participating businesses. The decals representing participation in the program are quite visible in businesses around town. Dave and Kristi will follow up in about a month with participating businesses to solicit feedback on how it is working for them so far. Next steps include getting to the majority of remaining businesses in town, either in person or via email (Kristi received a list of about a thousand businesses that are members of the local Chamber of Commerce) and then distributing the list of participating businesses – both on the Town's website on the VAB's page, and in the Item as part of our early May Veteran's Corner article introducing the program. Dave will also talk to Judy at the Senior Center to run an article on the program and participating businesses in the Senior Center Bulletin.

**Item 7: State Grant Program:** Deadline to submit an application for the State grant to restore historical memorials is April 9<sup>th</sup>. It requires committed funds from the town and matches the funds up to \$20,000. The memorials must be existing and historically significant. Melinda volunteered to reach out to Mr. Maio, and perhaps to Erin Kokinda, the Town's Community & Economic Development Director, to see if we could identify a project to clean/restore memorials around town, and if so to draft the town's application for the grant. If we cannot get a grant this go around, the Board endeavors to actively work with the Town to get a line item in the 2022 Town budget and on submitting a proposal next year (the grant program is awarded annually).

**Item 8: Memorial Day 2021 Program:** Mr. Maio confirmed the Board should plan for a virtual ceremony. Jay stated we should perhaps plan on two parallel tracks, a virtual ceremony, and a small in-person (no audience) meeting inside the Galvin Middle School. WCAT is likely to run past ceremonies on a loop that day. Jay also plans to propose to Barbara at WCAT that they run a program that shows each names and pictures of each of the 111 "Galvin Fallen Heroes". Paul suggested a ceremony to read the names. Maybe break the list up amongst the Board members to read portions. Organize the list by conflict. Paul plans to approach Ms. Bertrand about info on those that died in the civil war. However we proceed we need to identify a guest speaker. Melinda had a couple of ideas she was going to look into. We need to have concrete plans made no later than the next meeting of this Board (April 20<sup>th</sup>). Prior to Veteran's Day we need to get more info on the town's veterans. There are 844 who self-identify through the town census. Marion volunteered to drop off copies of the Honor and Remember book at the Elks, CCC, and WSSC.

**Item 9: Proposed Project to Erect Veterans' Field Memorial and Flagpole:** Dan sent an email to Mr. Maio with the concept design and pics. He also spoke with Mr Fazio who said they changed the sign color from bright red, to the more maroon like color you see on the tops of the information kiosks around town. The town has been busy with the pickle ball project over at Veteran's Field.

**Item 10: Main Street Banners:** Banners will be limited to the downtown area and the 111 Galvin Fallen Heroes at this time, but may be expanded to include other Wakefield veterans and other parts of town (Greenwood, etc) over time. We may also have regular flags along with the banners. Paul and Rob both stated that the Board should lobby to add just one other veteran to the current list, General John Galvin. Jay gave Mr. Maio a flash drive with the pictures of the Galvin Fallen Heroes. Mr. Maio intends to present the program to the Town Council on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Item 11: Other Business:** Discussed the merits of a proposed new member of the Board. Agreed it made sense to move his candidacy forward to the Town Council. Likely will replace Rick Pearson who will be leaving the Board when his term ends in April.

**Item 12: Adjournment:** The chair moved and Marion seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 PM

Submitted by: Rob Ettinger, Wakefield VAB Clerk