



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes – April 20, 2021

Meeting Attendees – Dan Benjamin, Paul Cancelliere, Rob Ettinger, Jay Pinette, Kristi Yentile, Marion Denehy, Brian McCoubrey, VSO Dave Mangan

Absent: Jackie Millinor, Sean McGrath, Melinda Cook, Michael Owen

Item 1: Call to order: Chairman Pinette called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM

Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance: conducted by all attendees

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

Item 4: VSO Report: from VSO Dave Mangan – The Veterans Mobile Food Market for Wakefield is tomorrow, Wednesday April 21st. The Wakefield food pantry has once again donated dry goods to go along with the Greater Boston Food Bank donations. We currently have 19 recipients.

We currently have 13 recipients on the Chapter 115 program in Wakefield.

Thank you to WCAT for airing the Vietnam 50th DVD on Vietnam Memorial Day last month over the weekend of March 27th. I have “A Time to Honor” books available at the office if anyone is interested in receiving one.

Judy Luciano, the director at the Wakefield Senior Center, will be placing a segment in the monthly bulletin regarding the Veterans Discount program that many businesses throughout the town are participating in.

Met with one of Wakefield’s WW 2 Veterans who was missing in action for 43 days after parachuting from a damaged B-17 bomber in 1943 over Yugoslavia. He was a belly turret gunner and his story is incredible. I will be writing about him for a future Veterans Corner article.

The Massachusetts Medal of Liberty is still being offered to the next of kin of service men and women from the commonwealth who were killed in action or who died in service while in a designated combat area in the line of duty or who died as a result of wounds received in action. Please contact VSO Mangan for further details.

My office is no longer getting calls for requests for vaccines as the network has been expanding rapidly thru radio and television media.

Congress has passed the “Saves Lives Act” which allows the VA to offer COVID-19 vaccines to more people. VA facilities are now able to offer vaccines to the following groups when their local VA facilities have enough vaccine: Veterans, Spouse of a Veteran, Caregivers of a Veteran, Recipients of Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) benefits.

My office will be available for any communication as your Veteran Service Officer to navigate you in the direction you wish to pursue. 781-246-6377 Located at 30 Converse St. (The senior center)



Wakefield. If I am unavailable at the time of your call, leave a voice mail and I will return your call promptly. I am doing office visits by appointment only and follow all of the COVID guidelines.

For any mental health information at VA Boston please contact Kyle Toto at 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 Paul to accept the VSO's report. Vote was unanimous.

Item 5: Veteran's Corner Article: The next article to be published will be introducing the town to the Veteran's Discount Program. A picture of the window decal for participating businesses will be included along with the article. A list of participating businesses will not be included. The article will encourage businesses that have not been contacted yet to reach out to VSO Dave Mangan. Article to be shared with Board tomorrow or Thursday.

Item 6: Wakefield Veterans Discount Program Update: VSO Mangan provided an update, along with Kristi. The program will be the subject of the next Veteran's Corner Article. The current list has 52 participating businesses. Discounts range from 5% and up. Kristi emailed a letter to 250 additional businesses asking them to get in touch with the VSO to discuss participating. List was provided by Wakefield Lynnfield Chamber of Commerce. Program is not for veteran spouses. Participating businesses will require ID. Veteran's can use driver's license with Veteran designation, VA ID card, or even a copy of their DD 214. Gold Star families – some have IDs, some have Gold Star Wives org cards. VSO to check with VA to see if they offer Gold Star Wives an ID.

Item 7: State Grant Program: Current year deadline has passed. 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). Perhaps replacing the missing hand on the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial? The Board may want to form a subcommittee now to pursue this initiative for 2022. To discuss formation of a subcommittee and developing a project list at the May meeting.

Item 8: Memorial Day 2021 Program: We may need to schedule a special meeting of the Board to finalize the plans for Memorial Day. We will plan to decorate the graves with flags in both cemeteries on the Friday and Monday. The flags are upstairs at the Senior Center. We will not advertise seeking volunteers. Mr. Maio confirmed the Board should plan for a ceremony that is held outside and compliant with Covid protocols. Jay to let American Legion know what our plans are. WSCC and Saugus are both doing their ceremonies at 10. To avoid conflicts, Wakefield's ceremony will be held at 1pm on Veterans Memorial Common, weather permitting. WCAT is likely to run past ceremonies on a loop that day. VSO to reach out to Barbara at WCAT to set up the broadcast of a scroll through the images of the 111 Galvin fallen heroes. Paul suggested asking if high school students (due to proximity to WCAT studio) would be willing to read the names of the 111 heroes as well. Jay to reach out to Kathy Lopez, a teacher at the high school, to see if she can manage arranging that. Other details discussed:

- No podium
- Invite State reps
- Someone to play taps – Jay to reach out to Mr Bankert
- Someone to sing national anthem – Jay to reach out to Mr Bankert
- Member of clergy - Jay to reach out to Rabbi Greg
- Guest speaker (5 minutes in length) - TBD

Item 9: Proposed Project to Erect Veterans' Field Memorial and Flagpole: We need to submit sketches/proposals. There appear to be no concerns about donations and acknowledgement signage. Mr. Maio said the proposal must go in front of Town Council. Proposal will be subject to 30-day public input period. The Board will move this to the top of the priorities list after Memorial Day.

Item 10: Main Street Banners: Banners will be limited to the downtown area and the 111 Galvin Fallen Heroes at this time. Jay added branch of service to pictures, and sent proofs of banners to Board. There will be 28 banners, 2 vets on each side. The other poles will have the Gazebo banners. The banners will fly from mid-May through the end of May. At that time they will be replaced with banners of Wakefield High School graduating seniors. Plan is to expand program for Veteran's Day. Prior to Veteran's Day, we need to solicit from the town folk info (names, branch, pics, dates of service) on other veterans to include on the poles. The Board will need to determine criteria for inclusion. A resident of Wakefield at time of service? All comers?

Item 11: Other Business: Discussed veteran parking spaces in town. Mr. Maio asked Jay about it, we need to get back to him. Melrose and Lynnfield did this recently. Where would we propose the space or spaces be? How would they be marked (sign, painted space, etc)? To discuss further at May VAB meeting.

Item 12: Adjournment: The chair moved, and Rob seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 PM

Submitted by: Rob Ettinger, Wakefield VAB Clerk