

**VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES: MEETING HELD 19 OCTOBER 2021
REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM**

Members Present:

- Jay Pinette, Mike Owen, Dan Benjamin, Marion Dennehy, Melinda Cook, Paul Cancelliere, and Brian McCoubrey

Members Absent:

- Jackie Millinor, Kristi Yentile, Joe Dellolio, Rob Ettinger, and Sean McGrath

Others in Attendance:

- Dave Mangan – Veterans Services Officer

Item 1: Call to Order: Chairman Pinette called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance: Conducted by all attendees. Prior to the Pledge Dan noted the efforts of former Town Councilor Peter May in the resumption of reciting the pledge at the start of Town Council meetings.

Item 3: Review/Approval of September 2021 VAB meeting minutes: Upon motion made by Jay and seconded by Marion it was unanimously:

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held September 21, 2021

Item 4: VSO Report: VSO Mangan discussed the following in varying levels of detail:

- Vets Food Bank will be held October 20 from 10 a.m. to noon. We're serving 18 families.
- Chapter 115 clients now number nine, a decrease of three. Recertification (required twice a year) will be going out soon. Dave is handling two to three claims a week.
- The "Roll to Washington" will be held in September 2022. Outreach will begin soon for Vietnam Era Vets interested in attending the trip to Washington, D.C. Vets need their DD-214 to participate.
- The VA is now offering Pfizer booster shots. Call 781-687-4000 to book an appointment.
- It is hoped that all returning Afghanistan vets will contact the VSO.
- Jay added that the names of businesses offering the veterans' discount should be publicized in the Item to promote the program.

Upon motion made by Jay and seconded by Paul it was unanimously:

VOTED: To approve the report of the VSO

Item 5: Veterans Corner Article: Jay discussed ongoing projects that could be addressed in the article including Veterans' Day Celebration, the veterans' coffee social, the Vets Field Memorial project, and the veteran's banner. Jay noted that there is some discussion to have November designated as "Veterans Month." This is in the early stages. Jay also mentioned that the town receives about \$429,000 a month which is an excellent reason to maintain the VSO position.

Item 6: Veterans Day Planning: Jay will be unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict. Paul agreed to serve as Master of Ceremonies. Jay noted that planning is in pretty good shape. He has a prepared script and agenda. David noted that Father Barker (St. Joseph's Parish) will participate. Jay believes Tom Lyons will be able to attend as the keynote speaker. The WMHS Choir will participate. The WMHS Wind Ensemble will perform "Pride of America." We will ask the local churches to ring their bells at 11 am as part of the annual "Bells of Peace" program. WFD Chief Sullivan will have an officer ring a bell at the outset of the program. John Boling of the American Legion will offer the Pledge of Allegiance. He will also be asked to recite the poem "In Flanders Field." We will have a wreath on stage. It was agreed that "Taps" will be played. Marion agreed to read any proclamations received from our representatives on Beacon Hill. Town Council Chair Julie Smith Galvin will bring the greetings of the town.

Item 7: Coffee Social: Dave discussed the following: There were nine attendees not counting VAB members. Dave talked about Chapter 115 benefits. Attendees spoke about their experiences in the service. We obtained email addresses for most attendees. Sardella Signs has offered to provide a sign to be placed at the entrance to Linda Road each time there is an event. After Dave's discussion it was agreed that we would continue with the Coffee Social each month on the second Saturday. For the remainder of this year that would be Saturday, November 13 and Saturday, December 11.

Item 8: Veterans Field Memorial Project: Dan reports that Sardella Signs was having technical issues when he stopped by to review "signage." Sardella was working diligently to get back online. Dan asked if the town could provide lighting. This will be pursued. Jay mentioned that Town Administrator Maio and DPW's Fazio support the overall concept of the memorial with "minor issues" we can address.

Item 9: Veteran's Banner Program: The timing and logistics are difficult for the T-Stop due to supply disruptions. Jay noted the response from veterans was under-whelming – only eight responded and, of those, only three submitted photos. The quality of the photos was not great. Jay cautioned that pictures OF pictures do not work.

Item 10: Other Business:

- Marion noted that the National Gold Star Wives convention will be held in Boston from July 12-17, 2022. The Park Plaza Hotel has offered a very attractive package.
- Melinda briefly discussed the grant program. The project must have historic interest to the town. She will provide more details shortly. A Letter of Interest ("LOI") must be sent by November 7.
- Jay discussed Wreaths Across America. There are 410 headstones at Forest Glade Cemetery plus selected other locations (maybe 430 wreaths in total). We have a CREDIT of 69 wreaths on our account. The placement will occur on Saturday, December 18 at noon. The cutoff for donations is Tuesday, November 30 (Jay

provided a sample form). We will prepare flyers for distribution to various locations and will have them available at the November 11 ceremony.

- Paul had a “public service announcement”: On November 14 there will be a veterans 10K road race at the Purple Heart Trail in Hamilton.

The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 16. All meetings of the VAB will be held via Zoom at least through year-end.

ITEM 11: Adjournment: As there was no other business to come before the board and upon motion made by Chairman Pinette and seconded by Marion Dennehy, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To adjourn at 7:38 p.m.

Submitted by: Robert Ettinger, Clerk