



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

## VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

### Meeting Minutes – November 16, 2021

Meeting Attendees – Paul Cancelliere, Rob Ettinger, Jay Pinette, Marion Denehy, VSO Dave Mangan, Dan Benjamin, Melinda Cook, Joe Dellolio, Brian McCoubrey, Sean McGrath

Absent: Kristi Yentile Jackie Millinor, Michael Owen

**Item 1: Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM

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

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

**Item 4: VSO Report:** from VSO Dave Mangan – Wakefield Veterans monthly Food bank will be held tomorrow for pick up behind the senior center 30 Converse St. from 10 am – 12 noon Wakefield food bank and the Greater Boston food bank contribute dry goods and food for our Veterans in need. We currently have 19 families who are signed up for the program.

We currently have nine Chapter 115 clients on our program. The recertification letters will be going out next week for the upcoming year for qualifications and validation. Although the Chapter 115 clients are reducing, the Veteran Benefit claims have been increasing significantly. I have been averaging two to three claims a week from both Veterans and Spousal interest.

The upcoming “Vietnam Veteran Roll to Washington” trip in September 2022 to visit the Wall and other monuments, I will be placing donation cards at various locations in town from the post office and the library to some businesses.

COVID Pfizer booster shots at the VA are now available for Veterans, spouses and caregivers. Shots may be obtained by making an appointment by calling 781-687-4000.

We have 1 additional Aid & Attendance application come thru the office and we have one that got approved for a pension to assist in some of the cost for home health care. Although it is not a large sum of money it helps offset the cost.

The Wakefield community Youth group on Veterans Day honored the Veterans by doing a clean up at three locations in town. With over 130 youth participants at 3 locations, they collected 293.5lbs of trash! With our pledge of \$5 per pound, we are now challenged to raise \$1,467.50 to help send Wakefield Veterans to the Vietnam Era Veterans Roll to Washington (in conjunction with the Wakefield Veterans Services).

The Veterans Legal Services Team will meet with Veterans individually via Telephone to address needs including: • legal advice, • assistance, • answering questions • the need for a court appearance of a pro bono attorney \*Legal matters or issues pertaining to states outside of Massachusetts, will require special review to determine if Veterans Legal Service Team can offer or provide assistance.



We will be awarding the Medal of Liberty to the Peach Family in recognition of Chester "James" Peach who was killed in an attack on the USS Hancock on April 7, 1945. There is also an upcoming job fair for Veterans.

The Office of the Adjutant General sent a notice that that service-connected death due to Agent Orange will no longer receive the Medal of Liberty offered to Massachusetts veterans, but will be developing this year a Medal of Valor for those who qualify.

We have had several A&A applications come thru the office and one that got approved for a pension to assist in some of the cost for home health care. Although it is not a large sum of money it helps offset the cost.

Motion by Jay, and second by Marion to accept the VSO's report. Vote was unanimous.

**Item 5: Veteran's Day Recap:** Jay received very positive feedback. It was a good crowd, maybe 200 people. VAB should send thank you notes, certificates to those town sponsors who donated goods and services. Paul to put together for Jay's signature. Need to work out a Girl Scout plan to get them involved more proactively.

**Item 6: Wreaths Across America Planning:** Item nice enough to pay for an insert for WAA. We put 100 flyers at Veterans Day, all were distributed. We're at 37% of our goal of 430 wreaths. Need to use other mediums to advertise. Facebook, etc. Will put flyers at Honey Dew. Date is December 18<sup>th</sup> (prior to our next meeting). What sort of program should we think about that would precede the laying of the wreaths? Maybe a bit of a preamble, just describing the program, taking place all over the country, number of wreaths, etc. Do we do a flag raising perhaps?

**Item 7: Veteran's Corner Article:** We need to talk about the fate of the banner program from this fall. Jay to draft article for review by group.

**Item 8: Coffee Social Recap & Planning:** Saturday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am for next social. Quannapowitt Yacht Club. Dave will email those folks who came last time and ask them to bring a friend or friends. Email will include presentation topic. There are several ongoing socials in the immediate area. We can look to them for ideas. How do we reach the younger vets?

**Item 9: Veterans Field Memorial Project:** No update for this month. Tough to source materials.

**Item 10: Veterans Banners Program:** We did not receive many photos, and they were not great photos. Do we have the funding to repair and reformat photos received? Scanned into jpg, etc. We got some photos of photos. Need to ask Town Hall for guidance on how to move forward. Each of these pics has a story that would be great to tell. We should consider a regular Item article, etc where we tell the story of a local veteran. Jay to reach out to Mr. Maio.

**Item 11: Other Business:** None

**Item 12: Adjournment:** Paul moved, and Dave seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 PM

Submitted by: Rob Ettinger, Wakefield VAB Clerk