



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes – April 19, 2022

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

Absent: Sean McGrath, Michael Owen, Dan Benjamin, Melinda Cook

Special Guests:

- Ms. Benny Wheat, Chairperson of the Wakefield Human Rights Commission
- Mark Sardella, Wakefield Daily Item

Item 1: Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM

Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance: conducted by all attendees

Item 3: Session with Benny Wheat Chairperson of the Wakefield Human Rights

Commission: Ms. Wheat joined the meeting to discuss the HRC's view on flying Juneteenth and Pride flags in additional spots from Americal Civic Center (obstructed by big tree in the month of June). Paul Cancelliere, Marion Denehy, VSO Mangan and Brian McCoubrey shared their views with Ms. Wheat, as previously (or to be) submitted to the Town Council. Ms. Wheat appreciated the suggestion that there be other ways (different flag poles, banners, etc) than co-locating on the same flagpole with the American Flag and POW/MIA flags.

Chairman Pinette suggested the VAB could be involved with seeking funding for the additional poles. And stated that the VAB supports the notion of having other flags displayed in town, just not on the same halyard as the American Flag and POW/MIA flags. Ms. Wheat plans to ask the Town Council at its April 25th meeting to let them put up a new flagpole, or fly these flags in other ways (Beebe Library, Bandstand, etc). Chairman Pinette asked that June 14th be reserved for celebrations of Flag Day. Ms. Wheat said they will hold their Juneteenth celebration on June 15th.

Item 4: Review/Approval of March 2022 VAB Meeting Minutes: Motion by Jay, and second by Marion to approve the March meeting minutes. Vote was unanimous.

Item 5: VSO Report: Wakefield Veterans monthly Food bank will be held Wednesday April 20th and we will have a total of 22 recipients an increase of 4 participants.

We currently have 11 chapter 115 participants in Wakefield. There was a cost-of-Living increase sent from The Department of Veteran Services and The Executive Office of Health and Human Services in the form of a one-time bulk check to cover the six-month period January 2022 thru June 2022.

I had a call from a homeless Veterans girlfriend who was staying with a friend. The locations in which he can get shelter and possibly housing will not allow him to have his girlfriend accompany him. I have discussed this with the HRT team (high risk team) at the police station and they provided them with social work assistance. I will continue to monitor this case as it progresses.



We currently have one new Aid and Attendance application that has been submitted with two more on the way. There has been an increase in Veteran's applying for VA benefits, spousal burial benefits, Aid and Attendance, Dependent indemnity compensation, upgrades in compensation due to medical issues, new applications from Veterans seeking assistance.

We have submitted two new Annuities for 100% disabled Veterans and they will be receiving their first installment in August.

The monthly Veteran coffee social was held on Saturday the April 9th at the Quannapowitt Yacht club and we had Guest speakers from the "Room to write" program. We are hoping to have Veterans enjoy the writing of their memoirs and assist them in working through some of their experiences for both historical value and ease of transition.

Thank you to Honey Dew Donuts for their generous contribution once again of coffee and donuts. The next social gathering will be on May 21st at 10 am the Third Saturday of the month this time, as the building will not be available. Please submit any talking points to the VSO office.

Marion Dennehy has agreed to be our guest speaker for Memorial Day. As the Gold Star chairperson she will bring awareness to the community of the value and sacrifices so many Veterans have contributed to our nations freedom making the ultimate sacrifice. She will bring a worthy attornment to the event. Also Mr. John Peach will be receiving the "Medal of Liberty" in honor of his brother Chester Peach who was killed during WW2 as a gunner on the USS Hancock in the South Pacific

The fund-raising event at the Dockside restaurant on March 29th went very well and we raised an additional \$3,000. Checks keep coming in and I will be doing a mailing in the next few weeks to several businesses. We currently have 15 committed Wakefield Veterans signed up, and one more with the application to be submitted. At some point we will more than likely be accepting alternates in the event any of these applicants cannot make the trip in September.

The Veteran Service office continues to reach out to the community for any Veteran who may need our assistance from navigating for benefits, to agencies who can give them support. Please call the office for further information if needed 781-246-6377. Motion by Jay, and second by Paul to accept the VSO's report. Vote was unanimous.

Item 6: Veteran's Corner Article: No updates

Item 7: Coffee Socials – Review / Recap of April 9th Social: Guest speakers from "Room to Write" attended. May 21st is next one. Dave continues to put out a newsletter on the coffee socials about a week before the next social. Please suggest some topics for future socials

Item 8: Veterans Field Memorial Project: No updates

Item 9: Memorial Day 2022 Planning: Marion Denehy will be our guest speaker. Jay has reached out to Girl Scouts / Boy Scouts, local politicians (Mr. Lewis, Mr. Wong, Ms. Garabidian, Mr. Maio, Mr Lipper, members of Town Council, etc). Jay will share responses – Ms. Garabidian has confirmed her attendance. Jay asked if we should have a collation, or no, it will be late (2:00-2:30). Board decided not needed this year. We will need to do publicity. We need to get wreaths. Maybe one large nice one this year. Bring to ceremony. And then place at memorial afterwards. We will read names of those that gave the ultimate sacrifice again this year.

Item 10: State Grant Program: No updates

Item 11: Board Composition / Officers / Thank You to Departing members: Leadership changes – Paul Cancelliere is new Chairman. Rob will continue as Secretary. The Board will look to elect a Vice Chair at the next meeting. Thank you, Chairman Pinette, for your service and leadership all of these years. Enjoy your retirement!

Item 13: Other Business: None

Item 14: Adjournment: Jay moved, and Dave seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM

Submitted by: Rob Ettinger, Wakefield VAB Secretary