



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes – June 21, 2022

Meeting Attendees – Paul Cancelliere, Rob Ettinger, Marion Denehy, VSO Dave Mangan, Joe Dellolio, Dan Benjamin, Kristi Yentile

Absent: Sean McGrath, Michael Owen, Bill Curran

Special Guests:

- Bob Vincent, Town Councilor, VAB liaison to Town Council
- Brian Fox & Maureen Buckley – to discuss Independence Day Parade

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

Pledge of Allegiance: conducted by all attendees

Review/Approval of May 2022 VAB Meeting Minutes: We did not get the minutes distributed prior to this meeting – we will approve the May and June meetings together at the next Board meeting in August.

VSO Report: Wakefield Veterans monthly Food bank was held last Wednesday June 15th. As the VSO's for the state were in summer training The Wakefield food bank provided both paper supplies and canned goods. The staff at the senior center distributed the items.

We now have 11 chapter 115 participants in Wakefield. We lost one Veteran on June 8th. He was a long time Wakefield resident of over 50 years and an Army Veteran who served during the Vietnam war period.

We have a Vietnam Veteran who is currently going through a financial hardship and he will be applying for chapter 115 within the next week as well as Veterans benefits for his disabilities. His wife is out of work and she will be applying for S/S. They also have a disabled son who lives with them and was on SSDI at one point but was taken off and they did not reapply after he turned 21. They have resubmitted his claim and are awaiting a decision. I would like at this time recommend to the board that we provide him with a onetime assistance of \$1,400 from the VETERAN RELIEF FUND towards paying his rent as he is in arias for June of \$1,400 going into July. Once I establish his eligibility for the chapter 115 he will be getting financial assistance from that program.

The Board voted (unanimous) to ask the town to approve a \$1,400 assistance payment from the Veterans Relief Fund to this veteran. Paul C and Councilor Vincent to approach Mr. Maio to discuss how to access the funds/next steps.

The Wakefield High Risk Team contacted my office on June 15th. There is a Veteran who was sent to the Brockton Elliot rehab center and is now undergoing treatment and will be released soon. I have contacted the SAVE team Paul Burke and provided the Elliot house rehab center with information for transitional housing and a quick guide for immediate shelter options.



I spent four days in training last week on the many changes taking place in Veterans benefits and Chapter 115 initiatives. The summer training had over 100 VSO's from the communities and towns attend and also had elections for the Massachusetts Veteran Service Officers Association.

The increase in requests for VA benefits, spousal benefits, Aid and Attendance, Dependent indemnity compensation, upgrades in compensation due to medical issues, new applications from Veterans seeking assistance has become challenging. I still have been covering the Melrose Veterans Services and supporting the Saugus VSO Michael Saunders. The New District Director who will be covering Saugus, Wakefield and Melrose is Roseann Trionfi-Mazzuchelli she will be starting on July 5th at the Milano Center in Melrose. She comes from the Winthrop Veteran Service office and was the past President of the MVSOA.

We had a Wakefield Marine, Veteran Mary O'Leary who turned 100 years old in May, and we presented her with the congressional commendation for her services during WW2. The award was presented by a fellow Marine of Wakefield Jay Pinette who wore the Marine polo and head gear giving her a smile that filled the room.

Marion Dennehy was the guest speaker and spoke eloquently on the Gold Star wife's, spouse's, and families sacrifices made during War conflicts and resulting demise of the affects of War. Her passion and dedication to the Wakefield community as she continues to honor and remember our Veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The flag placements at both the Forest Glade and Lakeside cemeteries were fulfilled and covered by both the Girl scouts, Boy scouts and various volunteers from the community. I left two dozen additional flags at the main offices for any we may have missed.

My hours of operation until July 5th will be Mon – Thur 7:30 am – 1:30 pm.

Introduction of Councilor Bob Vincent: Spent 26 years in Navy as JAG officer. Acts as liaison to 4 town boards (Fire, VAB, Bylaws Review, Housing) – will attend most or all of our meetings – will be active participant, where appropriate.

Discussion of Wakefield's Independence Day Parade: Brian Fox (Chairman of Parade Committee), and Maureen (Veteran's liaison to Parade Committee). We are inviting veteran's to parade to march, ride in an air-conditioned trolley, or ride on the beer wagon (sans beer). Veteran's who participate will be at the beginning of the parade and will be dropped off at the review stand to watch the rest of the parade. Submit names of interested veterans to Maureen. Maybe take out an add in the Item soliciting veterans?

Nomination of a Vice Chairperson of the VAB: Marion volunteered to perform the role. Rob motioned, Joe seconded voting on Marion as Vice Chairperson of the VAB. Vote passed unanimously.

Veterans Field Memorial Project: Dan and Paul met with Mr. Maio. The meeting went well. They largely approved the design. There will also be a sign on the backstop of the softball field with 2 stars. The outfield display will include 2 granite posts – the town will dig the holes. The town will likely replace the current flagpole with a taller one. Dan to talk to Bobby Sardella about the signage later this week. A ceremony to unveil the new signage is to be held on Veterans' Day. Board voted unanimously (Dan motion, Dave second) to approve a 9 am ceremony.

Gold Star Wives National Convention: In Boston July 12-17 Park Plaza – 2 memorial ceremonies for members (Spouses-at State House, Members aboard USS Constitution). Reached fund raising goal.

Military Service Day at the Patton Homestead: July 16th – Open to public - \$5-10 to park – static displays, first responders, etc, 1,000-1,200 people.

Coffee Socials: Taking a hiatus for summer – next one to be held September 17th

Veterans Corner Article: No updates – submit ideas directly to Item – Paul will try to write some more

State Grant Program (Soldiers' Monument): Paul to pursue funds over the summer to get this moving.

Room to Write Summer Program: Its almost 1:1 – very intimate, inspirational – documenting experiences we've had as members of the military.

Next Meeting: To be held 16th of August at 6:30 via Zoom. Limited agenda to discuss Veterans Day planning. Board unanimously approved (Marion moved, Dave second)

Other Business: None

Adjournment: Marion moved, and Dave seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 PM

Submitted by: Rob Ettinger, Wakefield VAB Secretary