



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes – October 18, 2022

Meeting Attendees – Paul Cancelliere, Marion Denehy, VSO Dave Mangan, Bill Curran, Michael Owens, Dan Benjamin (& Lois), Robert Ettinger, Joe Dellolio, Kristi Yentile

Absent: Sean McGrath

Special Guests: Bob Vincent

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM

Pledge of Allegiance: Conducted by all attendees

Review/Approval of September Meeting Minutes: Motion by Rob Ettinger to approve minutes, and second by Bill Curran. Vote was unanimous for approval.

VSO Report: The Veteran service office at the senior center has moved to the downstairs lower level next to the work out center. It is a nicer, more private location. When coming for an appointment, please check in with Marianne McPherson the administrator at the front desk and she will alert me as to your arrival.

The Greater Boston Food Bank” is tomorrow Wednesday October 19th and we currently have 20 participants in the generous program offered by the Greater Boston Food bank and the Wakefield food pantry. This program takes the edge off of the increase in all aspects of our economy to help the Veterans, the spouses and families in so many ways.

The new Medal of Fidelity has been passed for Massachusetts Veterans who have died as a result of service-connected death. Unlike the Medal of Liberty, which is from death in combat situations, the medal of Fidelity is awarded if a Veteran dies from service-connected aggravates.

The Medal of Fidelity has passed and will complement the existing Medal of Liberty, which is presented to the families of Massachusetts veterans who die of combat-related physical injuries. While similar to the Medal of Liberty, the Medal of Fidelity will instead recognize service-connected injuries related to exposure to harmful substances like Agent Orange and conditions like Gulf War Syndrome, in addition to combat-related mental illness.

The monthly Veteran coffee social will resume November 12th the Second Saturday of the month at the Quannapowitt Yacht club Linda Road. Normally we have been having them on the third Saturday, but I will be away that weekend. We will be discussing everything from Camp LeJeune to the PACT ACT (burn pit info) to the trip in D.C. Coffee and donuts will be provided compliments of Honey Dew.

Under Chapter 115 of Mass. General Laws the Commonwealth provides uniform program of financial and medical assistance for veterans and their dependents. Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel and medical



care in accordance with a formula that takes into consideration the number of dependents and income from all sources. Maximum Income number in family 1. \$2,265.00 2. \$3052.00
Maximum assets not counting home or vehicle: Single \$8,400.00 Married \$16,600.00
For more information and to apply please contact Dave Mangan, Veterans Service Officer at 781-246-6377

Veteran Services hours of operation starting in November:
Mon, Tues, Wed. 8 am – 2 pm
Holidays on Monday, hours will be Tues, Wed, Thurs 8 am -2 pm
Voice mails are checked seven days a week.

Marion moved and Mike seconded to accept the VSO's report. The vote was unanimous.

Veteran's Coffee social: Next meeting scheduled for Saturday, November 16th

Open VAB Seat: Mark Young, Wakefield resident – Navy veteran - Should be appointed at next meeting of Town Council. The VAB should adopt a procedure on the process for appointing member to the VAB. Rob moved, and Marion seconded to recommend moving along with Mark as a candidate. The vote was unanimous.

SHRAB grant (State Historical Records Advisory Board): VAB to submit letter of intent for a grant – one page form – indicates to State that Town is interested in applying for the grant – deadline is Nov 7th – we would use grant to initiate work on the Civil War memorials on common – grant size \$15k – Town would match funds – need volunteer from VAB to lead this project – Paul to submit letter of intent. Mr Vincent said check with Mr Maio and Nancy first – this may need to come up from the historical society rather than the VAB. We also may not be able to apply at all if we cannot show that the funds have been allocated by the Town.

State Legislation in process - S.2408 “An Act Relative to COLA Adjustments for Veterans Benefits”: Sam Stella member of the American Legion Post 63 addressed the Board regarding the tax abatement assessments. Sam spoke of the tax rate that has increase substantially yet the abatements given to those veterans that are less than 100% disabled and honorably discharged still receive only \$450 while those disabled and honorably discharged still receive \$1,000. Sam felt this should be tied with COLA increase. This issue is stuck in the Massachusetts Ways & Means Committee since February 2022. Paul and Mr. Vincent discussing how to make progress here (Department of Revenue, perhaps) prior to approaching our local State Senator.

Veterans Field Dedication: Dan Benjamin met with Bob Sardella on the sign – granite posts have been dropped off at the field. Town Council will vote to accept the gift for the signage. Bob Vincent will be the guest speaker at the dedication ceremony on Nov 11th. It will begin at 9:00am and last 20-30 minutes

Veterans Day Program(s): Paul had a conversation with Tom Hudner, Senior (son of Medal of Honor recipient). He has 85 slides for a presentation for Veterans Day. He has father's flight records, and medal of honor to display. The theme for the day is honor. Collation afterwards in cafeteria at Galvin. Paul discussed with Councilor Butt a coalition maybe with sandwiches, rather than just coffee and donuts. Marion will reach out to a local caterer. Paul reviewed the proposed agenda for the Veterans Day ceremony at the Galvin with the VAB. Need Dave to order 2

wreaths for the two ceremonies. Vet's Field ceremony at 9am – Main ceremony at Galvin at 11 am.

Creation of VAB Bylaws (public body; Ch 9): Paul to finish discussing with Mr. Vincent and draft a two-page (or so) by-laws that outlines our charter. Draft to be sent to Board for vote at December meeting of VAB.

Wreaths Across America Planning: Jay Pinette and Denis Fazzio will order wreaths for us this year – easiest way to do it for this year – date is December 17th – small ceremony at Forest Glade at noon – 425 headstones to decorate – we have a credit of some large amount of wreaths – Dave will bring some flyers to Wakefield 101. Will get insert into Item before Veterans Day

Other business. We picked up two more businesses for the Veteran's Discount Program - Tasso's Auto and Sharper Image Barbershop.

Town was given \$6.2 million in Federal Pandemic Funds – Mr Vincent recommended allocating \$250k to restore monuments in town, especially the Civil War memorial.

Next Meeting: Next meeting will be November 15th at 6:30 PM on Zoom

Adjournment: Marion made motion to adjourn and Bill seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Ettinger, Secretary, VAB