



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2022

Meeting Attendees – Paul Cancelliere, Marion Denehy, VSO Dave Mangan, Bill Curran (until 7:00pm), Dan Benjamin (& Lois), Robert Ettinger, Kristi Yentile, Marc Young, Joe Dellolio

Absent: Sean McGrath, Michael Owens

Special Guests: Bob Vincent, Jay Pinette (for WAA discussion)

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

Pledge of Allegiance: Conducted by all attendees

Review/Approval of October Meeting Minutes: Motion by Dave to approve minutes, and second by Joe Dellolio. Vote was unanimous for approval.

VSO Report: The Greater Boston Food Bank is tomorrow, Wednesday November 16th, from 9:30 am to 12 noon - we now have 22 participants in the program co-offered with 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 their families in so many ways.

Veterans' Day ceremonies last Thursday and Friday at the Galvin and Woodville elementary schools was spectacular. Included in the Friday ceremony was Mr. Paul Fazzini, who was awarded the Korean Ambassador for peace medal in the presence of the community. His continued community service not only as a Veteran, but as a member in the "council of clubs" for many years shows his dedicated service to Wakefield and the Nation.

"Roll To Washington" wrap up and award ceremony was held tonight at the Saugus VFW Post 2346. All of the participants from Saugus, Wakefield and Melrose who ventured on the trip of a lifetime were given photo CD's of the trip along with recognition for their service to America and their communities. Huge kudos go out to the committee: Stacey Minchello, Erica Brown, Jay Pinette, Dennis Gould and your humble servant David Mangan for the hard work and organization skills in making this event such a success.

The Youth council, headed by Kathrine Dhingra, has once again put forth the cleaning of the parks and courts, raising money for the Veterans Relief fund through the efforts of the Wakefield Youth Council funding for any Veterans or spouses in need in the community. They have sponsors who will donate up to \$5 per pound of trash that they will pick up. Last clean up, over 130 youth came together and raised over \$1400 towards the Roll to Washington for our Vietnam Veterans. Thank you, Kathrine, and the Youth Council, for such a great Job!

The monthly Veteran coffee social although was held the Saturday after Veterans Day and was attended by 7 Veterans who were brought up to speed on the PACT act and the presumptive illnesses that occurred from exposure to various chemical components. We also had a guest speaker, Linda Malcolm, who explained the various approaches that are being considered for the



upcoming series on “A room to write” program. As always Honey Dew provided the coffee and donuts, and we are all grateful for that.

We currently have 13 clients on the chapter 115 program and have been advertising the outreach for this through several outlets including the newsletter at the senior center. The recertification for this program happens twice a year in January and June, so we are about to send out the letters to our clients to comply with the required documents needed to ensure they get all of the benefits they are entitled to. The medal of Fidelity can now be applied for, for those who have passed due to a service-connected death after the wartime such as from agent orange or burn pit exposure. With 100% disabled Veterans they are also entitled to the twice a year annuity of \$1000, which along with their 115 benefits is tax free.

Under Chapter 115 of Mass. General Laws the Commonwealth provides a 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. There is an 8.9% increase upcoming in January for cost of living.

For more information and to apply please contact Dave Mangan, Veterans Service Officer at 781-246-6377

Veteran Services hours of operation will be starting in November:

Mon. – Wed. and Thurs. 8 am – 2 pm

Holidays on Monday hours will be Tues. Wed. and Thursday 8 am -2 pm

Voice mails are checked seven days a week.

The report was accepted by the Committee.

Veteran’s Coffee social: Next meeting scheduled for 10-11am on Saturday, December 17th at the QYC. Speaker TBD. Saturday, December 17, 2022 is Wreath Day at Forest Glade Cemetery. There is a small ceremony at 12:00pm (noon) to Remember, Honor, and Teach as the residents join to place wreaths on the veterans graves.

Welcome Marc Young to VAB: Mark Young, Wakefield resident and Navy veteran, was recently appointed to the Board. We welcome him to his first meeting, and look forward to working with him. Marc described his time in service and what he hoped to get out of his time on the Board.

Feedback on Veterans’ Day Program(s): Very well received by the Town. Hard to hear at Vets’ Field ceremony. A special thank you to Lois Benjamin from the Board. Jay Pinette was instrumental in preparing prior agendas for the VAB to build upon. Paul will continue to invite local recruiters to be more involved.

Follow-up on State Disabled Veterans Property Tax Benefits Linked to COLA: Amount hasn’t increased in 2 decades. Needs to be raised again under new administration. Senator Lewis’s (Rob Sailer) office has been a huge advocate. We need to get on his calendar. We need to get this through Committee at the State House. Paul will pursue with our legislators and keep the VAB informed. May approach DoD State Liaison.

Creation of VAB Charter/Mission Statement/SOP (public body; Ch 9.19 through 9.27 of Town By-laws): Paul to craft a 1-2 page VAB charter that is linked to the Town By-laws. Paul and Mr. Vincent to work with members of the by-law committee on a draft prior to December meeting. Key word is Advisory (to VSO and Town Council). Do we (VAB) want to submit our own separate submission to the Annual Report of the Town. VSO currently completes the annual report to the town.

Civil War Memorial Repairs: Soldiers and Sailors memorial. ARPA (American Rescue Pandemic Funds). Town Council allocated \$10,000 last night for an evaluation of necessary repairs. Mr Vincent gave the Council an overview. Ms Bertrand Maio money Wants we have the test done and an expected cost, will go back for additional money to begin repairs - CPA community lost 2-1 in 2002 (has tax ramifications), we are not, 200+ are, we need grants - we need allocate funds – Town Budget – never included. Veterans Heritage Grant (15k) Bob asked for 65 (40-15)

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 – 430 headstones to decorate – 357 purchased to date (244 from prior year overage) Jay will put a letter in the Item encouraging donations – WCAT has put a one pager up on the loop. ,There was a suggestion to post digital material from Wreaths Across America.

Other business: None.

Next Meeting: Next meeting will be Tuesday, December 20th at 6:30 PM via Zoom.

Adjournment: Marion made motion to adjourn, and Dave seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Ettinger, Secretary, VAB