



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

## VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

### **Meeting Minutes – December 20, 2022**

Meeting Attendees – Paul Cancelliere, Marion Denehy, VSO Dave Mangan, Dan Benjamin (& Lois), Robert Ettinger, Kristi Yentile, Marc Young, Joe Dellolio

Absent: Sean McGrath, Michael Owens, Bill Curran

Special Guests: Bob Vincent

**Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Conducted by all attendees

**Review/Approval of November Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Paul to approve minutes, and second by Dave. Vote was unanimous for approval.

**VSO Report:** Wakefield Veterans monthly Food bank will be held tomorrow Wednesday Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> - we currently have 22 participants in the program. Both the Wakefield food pantry and the Greater Boston food bank contribute items. We have been given 22 Gift cards to distribute as a Donation from the First Parish Congregational Church as a holiday gift, along with the food and dry goods as well.

We currently have 13 clients on our program. The recertifications have begun and although all of the documents have not been sent in, we are hoping to have them processed by the end of December. With the help of a generous Veteran in our community we have 13, \$100 gift cards to Shaw's we have given out with this month's allowance.

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

We have additional Aid & Attendance applications coming thru the office along with several Dependent Indemnity Compensations (D.I.C) for surviving spouses of Veterans who have passed due to service-connected disabilities. With this D.I.C. program offered by the Veterans Administration, it can assist the surviving spouse with up to \$1,600 a month for financial sustainability.

A surviving spouse of a Wakefield Marine Veteran who was stationed at Camp LeJeune during the time period prior to 1988 contacted the office regarding his untimely demise 20 years ago from Bladder Cancer one of the main complications from the contaminated water. I did some research and she may be entitled to the D.I.C. claim pending the medical evidence we submit. I



am in the process of having this claim filed. If a Veteran currently has a disability compensation with the VA and they have a lawyer seeking further compensation, then the VA will deduct any award they receive as a result of the lawyers suing. You cannot sue the VA twice. The amount will be deducted from the monthly claim the Veteran has been awarded.

We now have the applications for the Medal of Fidelity available in my office. This medal unlike the Medal of Liberty for K.I.A. is for service members who pass away due to complications from battle such as exposure to hazardous chemicals like Agent Orange, burn pits etc. Also, complications for any 100% disabled Veteran who succumbs to battle injuries. We have already sent in two and will be reaching out to others who were denied the medal of liberty.

The Wreaths Across America Campaign on Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> was a tremendous success. Having many folks show up for the wreath placing made it a quick yet a solemn encounter. With 438 Wreaths dispersed it was a tremendous success.

The generous contributions of GIFT cards for the chapter 115 Veterans and spouses this year for the Christmas season was greatly appreciated by all. Many thank you messages came to my office for not only the anonymous contributors, but also the First Parish Congregational church who continually provides gift cards for the holidays to those in the community during troubled financial times.

Wakefield Health and Human services

<https://www.wakefield.ma.us/health-and-human-services>

Visiting this site, will give you information on the Flu clinics available for all residences also you may call Health Department: (781) 246-6375 for more information or making an appointment.

Veteran Services

30 Converse St. Wakefield

Veteran Services hours of operation:

Mon. – Wed. & Thursday. 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.

Dan moved, Joe seconded, approval of the VSO Report. Vote was unanimous.

**Veteran's Coffee social:** Next meeting scheduled for 10-11am on Saturday, January 21st at the QYC. Speaker TBD.

**Wreaths Across America ceremony (After Action Review):** Well received and well attended. Special thanks to Dave for leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance. WCAT covered and is running throughout the day. The VAB appreciates the attendance of our Town leaders. Mr. Vincent (as a Veteran) appreciates these town ceremonies honoring veterans.

**Follow-up on Disabled Veterans Earned Benefits relative to COLA: Bills S.2408 “An Act Relative to COLA Adjustments for Veterans Benefits” and H.3677 “An Act relative to COLA adjustments for veteran benefits”:** The energy to move this forward needs to be placed on the republican side of the State House. Democrats appear ready to file.

**DRAFT VAB Bylaw/Charter/Operating Procedures in accordance Public Body Ch 9:** Paul drafted notes as a starting point. The Board discussed various elements of those notes. VAB will ask Town Council to stagger appointments (through Ms. Dalton).

**Soldiers and Sailors Monument repairs:** Mr. Vincent said DPW will be meeting with an SME on 27<sup>th</sup> of December to start the process of scope and cost. This is the same company that was consulted in 2007. We have \$10,000 in ARPA money for these assessments. Mr. Vincent will try to attend that meeting.

**Confirm 2023 VAB Meeting Schedule:** Rob to convey January through June dates to Sherri.

**2023 VAB Board Member Term Renewals:** More than 2/3rs of Board due in April 2023. Paul to take up with Sherri.

**Set the Scope for Memorial Day 2023 program:** Monday May 29th at 1pm at GMS – Dave said flags have been ordered (20% more than last year). Paul has secured a speaker (to be announced).

**Other business:** Dave Mangan mentioned that several people have wondered about having the Americal Civic Center renamed after recently passed, Mr. Jim Scott. VAB to discuss further, potentially recommend to Town Council. Mr Vincent to look into status of 2 new flag poles being donated by the Council of Clubs.

**Next Meeting:** Next meeting will be Tuesday, January 17th at 6:30 PM via Zoom.

**Adjournment:** Rob made motion to adjourn, and Paul seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Ettinger, Secretary, VAB