



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

## VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

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### **Meeting Minutes – June 20, 2023**

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

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

**Attendance:** In attendance – Paul Cancelliere, Dan Benjamin (& Lois), Rob Ettinger, VSO Dave Mangan, Marion Dennehy, Marc Young, Dale Findlay, Chris Olsen, Joe Dellolio. Absent: Kristi Yentile, Bill Curran. Special Guests: Ed Dombroski, Town Council, VAB Liaison.

**Approval of May Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Dale to approve minutes, and second by Joe. Vote was unanimous for approval.

**VSO Report:** The Veterans monthly food and dry goods support program will be held this Wednesday, June 21st, behind the senior center from 10 am to 12 noon. All 27 applicants have been notified by our Volunteer. If any Veteran, spouse, or immediate family member of a Veteran would like to participate in this program, please call our office for further information. The products are offered through the Greater Boston Food bank and have a vast selection of meats, vegetables, and dry goods. Support for this program is also contributed by the Wakefield Food Pantry.

The monthly Veterans Coffees social was held Saturday June 17th 10 am to 12 noon at the McCarthy Senior Center 30 Converse St. Wakefield. We discussed many of the changes in the Veteran benefits including the home health care for family members to assist Veterans and be reimbursed for their time as a care giver.

Coffee and donuts were donated by “Honey Dew” on the Quannapowitt “Thank you Derik and your team for your continued generous support of our social.

This will be the last of the socials until September at which time I will send out a notice and flyer reminding folks of the event which will be held on the third Saturday Sept. 16th.

We have had an influx of applications for Aid & Attendance of which the Veteran must have a 100% service-connected disability to qualify and if the care giver program is requested than a family caregiver can apply to see if they are eligible. In which case the Veteran would have to have a 70% or higher service-connected disability on or after Sept. 11, 2001 or on or before May 7, 1975 and the Veteran must have been discharged from the U.S. Military or have a date of medical discharge, and the veteran must need at least 6 months of continuous in person personal care services. If the Veteran is over 65 years of age, they can apply for the pension providing they served the required amount of time to help offset the cost of home health care.

The Welcome Home Bonus program for Massachusetts Veterans who served is also available thru our office to see if they are eligible.

Massachusetts also has an annuity compensation for 100% service-connected Veterans who qualify and spouses of 100% service-connected Veterans who, if they have not remarried are eligible for the deceased Veterans compensation. This is a twice a year award that is \$1,000 tax



free offered by the Commonwealth once in February and another in August. For more information, please contact my office.

As I mention each month Under Chapter 115 of Massachusetts 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.

For appointments for Veteran Services, please contact me with any questions you may have regarding on-going benefits or submission of new benefits. We are located downstairs / rear entrance at the Senior Center 30 Converse St. Wakefield and is by appointment only.

Veteran Services hours of operation:

Monday, Wed. & Thursday. 8 am – 2 pm

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

Voice mail is checked seven days a week at: 781-246-6377.

And on a final note: a fair fond farewell to Councilor liaison Bob Vincent for all of his hard work and dedication to the board and a hail to Councilor Ed Dombroski as the new Veterans Advisory Board liaison. The input and development through the knowledge of community concerns and commitments are always guided by the passion of our councilors being interactive with the board and for this we are grateful.

**Member's Report (around the horn):** Dan discussed trying a new approach with Flag Day to help out the American Legion folks that have been doing it. Joe gave Dave's contact info at his Burlington Microsoft office Veteran's affinity group. Joe may present to the Board current openings at Microsoft. Chris would love to document the stories of Wakefield veterans, and get them out to social media and the Daily Item. Dale seconded that the American Legion folks are struggling a bit physically, and could definitely use some additional support at these town ceremonies. Could Lynn English (Marines) or Revere (Army) JROTC supplement some of these ceremonies? Chris will try to find a contact over there. Also think about USS Constitution sailors?

**Secretary's report:** Nothing to report.

**Vice-chair's report:** Nothing to report.

**Chair's report – reflection and looking forward:** In 2022-2023: (i) we added a set of service flags will look to utilize them in more ceremonies around town, (ii) attended Town Day on the common with a VAB table, (iii) dedicated Veteran's Field with new signage, (iv) had Thomas Hudner at Veteran's Day ceremony, as well as Peter Vezina, (v) held wreath day ceremony in December, (vi) Temple Emmanuelle to remember and honor the 4 chaplains, (vii) in April the Wakefield Lacrosse team hosted and honored local veterans, and (viii) Andrew Biggio, author of the Rifle, highlighted the Town's Memorial Day ceremony, honoring the Town's 161 fallen, and honoring 3 gold star wives. Thank you for these and all other services you have provided the Town's veterans.

- 2023 – 2024 Annual Schedule – attached below

- Community Outreach: Veterans Corner Articles, Room 2 Write, WCAT...
- Fourth of July Parade, Coast Guard Birthday August 4.
- Military Service Day at the Patton Homestead (Saturday, July 15th)
- Should we re-imagine the Veteran's Day 2023 ceremony (on a Saturday) – maybe add a brunch? We could hold at the West Side Social Club (Marion will secure). Be great to get Woody as a speaker. Marion moved and Paul seconded to add this to our August agenda for further discussion.

**Town Council Liaison's comments:** Honored to have this liaison role to this important Board. Wants to be our voice, representing our interests. Coffee Social was a great opportunity to hear voices of local veterans. There is a Veteran Services town budget amount which is available. Property tax breaks for certain veterans is an important and current topic on my plate. Please feel free to reach out for help on any veterans or town matters.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 6:30 pm (via Zoom)

**Matters Not Anticipated for Agenda (Any Voting matters not anticipated necessitating action by the Veterans Advisory Board)**

**Adjournment (motion to adjourn):** Rob motioned, Marion seconded, a motion to adjourn. Vote was unanimous. Meeting was adjourned at 7:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Ettinger, Secretary, VAB

## 2023-24 VAB Schedule of Meetings and Events

Veterans Advisory Board meetings are currently held monthly, usually on the third Tuesday of each month VIA Zoom. There are some exceptions noted below.

### 1. VAB – Public Zoom Meetings 2023 - 2024

#### 2023

July 2023 – No Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 6:30pm via Zoom (very short agenda)

Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 6:30pm via Zoom

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 6:30pm via Zoom

*\*Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 6:30pm via Zoom*

The November 2023 VAB meeting is the second week of November because Thanksgiving is early falling on 11/23/2023.

Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 6:30pm via Zoom

#### 2024

Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 6:30pm via Zoom

*\*Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 6:30pm via Zoom*

The February 2024 VAB meeting is on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month avoiding February school vacation week.

Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 6:30pm via Zoom

*\*Tuesday, April 23, 2024, at 6:30pm via Zoom*

The April 2024 VAB meeting is on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month avoiding April school vacation week.

Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at 6:30pm via Zoom

Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 6:30pm via Zoom

## **2. VAB 2023 – 2024 Events**

### **May 2023**

Cemetery Flags at Lakeside Cemetery, Monday, May 22, 2023, at 3:00pm

Forest Glade Cemetery, Friday, May 26, 2023, at 3:00pm

Memorial Day, Monday May 29, 2023, at 1:00pm at the General Galvin Middle School

### **June 2023**

Flag Day Ceremony, June 14, 2023, at the War Memorial at 6:00pm

### **July 2023**

4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade – All Day

### **November 2023**

*Veterans Day – Saturday, November 11, 2023, Ceremony is at 11:00am.*

### **December 2023**

Wreath Day Saturday, December 16, 2023, at 12:00pm at Forest Glade Cemetery

### **February 2024**

Four Chaplains Day Saturday, February 3, 2024, at 9:00am at the Four Chaplains Monument Temple Emanuel

### **May 2024**

Memorial Day, Monday May 27, 2024,

### **June 2024**

Flag Day, Friday, June 14, 2024, at 7:00pm at the Memorial