



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

## VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

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### **Meeting Minutes – August 15, 2023**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:32 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, Bill Curran, Kristi Yentile. Absent: Dale Findlay, Chris Olsen, Joe Dellolio. Special Guests: Ed Dombroski, Town Council, VAB Liaison.

**Approval of June Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Marion to approve minutes, and second by Dan. Vote was unanimous for approval.

**VSO Report:** The Veterans monthly food and dry goods support program will be held this Wednesday, August 16th, behind the senior center from 10 am to 12 noon. All 27 applicants have been notified by our Volunteer Nancy. 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 781-246-6377. The products are offered through the Greater Boston Food bank and have a vast selection of meats, vegetables and canned goods. Support for this program is also contributed by the Wakefield Food Pantry for dry goods.

The monthly Veterans Coffee social will be held Saturday September 16th 10 am to 12 noon at the McCarthy Senior Center downstairs in back of building 30 Converse St. Wakefield. We will have a vast array of donated service items on the table to pick from. We will be discussing 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. We will also have a “Share the History” moment and open floor dialog. Coffee and donuts will be donated by “Honey Dew” on the Quannapowitt “Thank you Derik” for your continued generous support of our social.

I will be discussing Aid & Attendance for surviving Veterans 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.

The Videos have come in for the Vietnam Veterans who shared the trip to Washington last September and are very nice. They aired them on WCAT for several days. I have sent out an email to the participants to come to the office to pick them up.



The 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 went out on the first of August. 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.

For Service-connected disabled Veterans who own homes here in Wakefield there is an abatement on your property taxes with a variable depending on the % of disability. The assessor's office at the town hall and the web site has more information regarding this benefit.

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.

**Member's Report (around the horn):** (1) Marion suggested that a couple members of the VAB talks to Human Rights Commission to ensure we can be on the same page for next year's Flag Day. Other members showed support. (2) Dan Benjamin mentioned that it was great to see ground breaking of the new Soldiers Home in Holyoke.

**Secretary's report:** I'll be following up with certain members that still need to be sworn in, or complete their Public Bodies Handbook Acknowledgement Form.

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

**Chair's report:** Discussion of Veteran's Day Poster contest, and Wakefield's Veteran's Day Ceremony plans. Also discussed the November 9<sup>th</sup> Breakfast.

**Coffee Social logistics (Senior Center vs QYC):** We will be using the Senior Center from now on. More room, wheelchair accessible.

**Veteran's Day – Saturday November 11<sup>th</sup>:** Theme is "Service" Location should be Galvin Middle School. Paul will reach out to HS for musical support.

**Town Council Liaison's comments:** Would like to help with any initiatives we have.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, September 19, 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):** Marion motioned, Dave seconded, a motion to adjourn. Vote was unanimous. Meeting was adjourned at 7:17pm.

Respectfully submitted, Rob Ettinger,

Secretary, VAB