

## Veterans' Committee Minutes

April 4, 2011 – 2:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman M. Johnson; Supervisors Barrett, Collyer, Lucia, Thompson, Wright, Yepsen, Wood, and Southworth; Spencer Hellwig, Administrator; Gene Corsale, Veterans Volunteer; Kathy Marchione, Kate Jeanson, County Clerk; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Andrew Davis, Veterans Director; Jen Van Ort, Publication Specialist; Press.

Chairman M. Johnson called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

**On a motion made by Ms. Yepsen, seconded by Mr. Collyer the minutes of the March 7, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously.**

Ms. Ciulla said the Navy Band of the Northeast, as talked about last month, is available on Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. Their financial assistance estimate is \$4,892; however, they will not confirm the date until 60 days out.

The next choice would be the United States Coast Guard Band, available on either Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> at a cost of no more than \$6,000. They are hoping to contribute toward the costs, but won't know until the Federal budget is finalized. This price would include the full band of 55 members.

The West Point Band is still trying to work something out. They would be able to perform on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>. They are now stating that they would be able to contribute some of the costs, but would like the county to come to them with a dollar amount that the county would be able to contribute, and they would see if they could come up with the rest.

Mr. Thompson said he has found someone who is willing to donate the mailing prep, printing of the poster and printing of the tickets.

Ms. Ciulla said she checked with SPAC about concession prices and as soon as a date is confirmed SPAC will check to see what the lowest price is that they can negotiate.

**A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Lucia to approve the United State Coast Guard Band to play for the Veteran's Concert on September 17, 2011 at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. Unanimous.**

Mr. Davis said there would be a special ceremony to honor Clarence Dart who is currently living at the Wesley Health Care Center. Mr. Dart was a Tuskegee Airmen with the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was also awarded the Congressional Gold Medal along with all of the Tuskegee Airmen a few years ago, and also attended President Obama's Inauguration. There will be a ceremony in honor of Mr. Dart at the

Wesley activity room on April 20, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. This will be a county oriented ceremony with Supervisors M. Johnson, as master of ceremony. A Senate Liberty Medal will be presented from Senator McDonald's office, and Assemblyman Tedisco will be in attendance for a citation. The WWII Saratoga County medal, certificate, and County proclamation will be presented as well. Mayor Johnson from Saratoga Springs has been asked to present a proclamation, as Mr. Dart was a Saratoga Springs resident. Mr. Dart has eight children, most of which are local, as well as Mr. Dart's wife. Congressman Gibson's office have a presentation, and the United States Conspicuous Service Cross will be presented by a uniformed officer. The Chaplain from the Stillwater Legion will be present for the invocation and benediction. There are thirty veterans at Wesley that will be in attendance. As there is only room for 65 at the ceremony, invitations will not be open to the public. There will be lunch and cake after the ceremony for family and dignitaries. This will be the first living veteran that has been honored in Saratoga County, and also the first African-American to be honored.

Mrs. Johnson encouraged all supervisors to let Ms. Ciulla know if they are going to attend the Clarence Dart ceremony as soon as possible as there is limited seating.

Mrs. Marchione said the Return the FAVOR program is going very well. There are approximately 1,000 applications out to people, with approximately 29 possible associations and organizations to get to with someone attending approximately 11 of them, including the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. There are approximately 45 businesses that have signed up for the program thus far. A spreadsheet is now on the county website that will allow individuals to apply on line, and Veterans to sign up if they want to be kept apprised of the project. It is expected that the launch date will be on July 5, 2011.

Mrs. Marchione said there have been a number of Veterans's coming to the County Clerk's office with a copy of their DD214, which cannot be filed. She encouraged anyone who may be talking about the program that they stress that the original copy of the DD214 must be submitted for filing in the County Clerk's office.

Mrs. Johnson asked if someone were to need an original copy of a DD214, who would they go to? Mrs. Marchione said they should be transferred to the Veterans office. Mr. Davis said it will take six to eight weeks to get a sealed copy of the DD214, so he encouraged sending anyone who needs one to his office as soon as possible.

Mrs. Johnson said on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. at the Wilton Elks there will be a Yellow Ribbon Day ceremony.

Ms. Ciulla said there are six towns that have scheduled to use the county Veterans' Float thus far.

Mr. Moore said there are couple of county governments that are looking to adopt local laws that would prohibit protests within certain distances at military funerals, as well as, setting up time restrictions. The restrictions are usually an hour before and an hour after

such an event. This is growing out of a Supreme Court decision that was made last month. The Supreme Court stated that the speech is protected, but the locality has the right to set a reasonable time and reasonable place restriction on whether these protests happen. The counties in the state that are currently looking at this are Nassau and Suffolk counties where they actually have laws on the books. Nassau County is looking to expand their law to 1,000 feet. Other counties that are looking at it are Warren, Essex, Monroe, Onondaga, Oswego and Rockland. In terms of the time, most are looking at an hour before and an hour after. In terms of the distance from these events, most are looking at 1,000 feet or less. There is some legislation that is going through the state legislature, with two bills that have passed in the NY State Senate that are awaiting action in the Assembly.

Mrs. Johnson said she and Mr. Davis spoke to Mr. Moore about the fact that a lot of the Saratoga County burials are at the Saratoga National Cemetery which is a Federal cemetery. The question was raised if any State Law would override the Federal law or vice versa.

Mr. Thompson asked what the Federal Government says? Mrs. Johnson said she and Mr. Davis have asked Mr. Moore to look into what the Federal Legislation would be, so that we don't redo something that may already exist. We want to make sure that what we have out there already or may be in legislation right now will take care of any problems that may occur.

Mr. Barrett asked what the main reasons were that people protest? Mr. Moore said the specific protest that led to the Supreme Court case was that the group indiscriminately took issue with one family. They have issues with the way that the military has been handling homosexuality. They have latched on to one particular case in Maryland, where homosexuality had nothing to do with this particular Veteran, but they attacked the family in terms of the way that they had brought their son up. It was very personal, but the court ultimately ruled that they weren't alleging that these were actual facts about the family or about the Veteran in question, that they were just drawing attention to a policy and that it was protected speech.

Mr. Barrett said in many of the services the chance arises that you could put yourself in harms way. To think that after you have given the final sacrifice, that people would not, at least, respect the family during their time of sorrow is just amazing. It seems ludicrous that we should have to put a law together like this, but we do and we should.

Mr. Barrett said any advice that Mr. Moore could bring forward after working with Mr. Davis and the County Attorney members of the committee would be interested in hearing so that we can move forward.

Mrs. Johnson said that she would like to have some of the specifics on some of the laws, the State law that we already have and the Federal law with regard to our cemetery. She requested that Mr. Moore bring that information to the next Veterans' meeting for discussion on how to move forward.

Mr. Moore said there is a state law that doesn't just apply to military funerals, but to all funerals that states there can't be disturbances within 100 feet. Most counties are considering changing this to between 500 to 1,000 feet.

Mrs. Johnson said the county has received a letter from Lockheed Martin requesting a letter of support that the Federal Government continue funding for the F35 airplane.

Mr. Moore said the F35 has already been commissioned and is in production. Lockheed Martin is requesting that the county indicate their support to the congressional delegation to continue funding. This is going to be the most advanced fighter jet project in the world and is meant to compete with the Chinese and Russians. Lockheed Martin is doing a lot of the work on this and they estimate on the economic side approximately 4,400 jobs in New York State as well as approximately \$320 million of economic impact to New York State.

Mr. Barrett asked if this was the next generation of fighter planes? Mr. Moore said yes. Mr. Barrett said with two wars and a no fly zone that the United States has just committed to in Libya, it would seem that air superiority now and in the future is extremely important, as well as the economic boom to New York State. He said he would be supportive of the request.

Mr. Thompson said he would like to check with local Congressmen and let the letter come from them. Mr. Wright agreed that more research needed to be done before agreeing to a letter of support coming from the Board of Supervisors. Mrs. Johnson said she would look into it and report back to the committee.

Mrs. Johnson said on Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., the Saratoga County Rural Preservation Group is sponsoring an event to benefit the Guardian House Project at Vapor NightClub. A donation of \$10 is requested.

**On a motion made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Thompson the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Sansom