

Veterans Committee Minutes
October 3, 2017 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Mo Wright; Supervisors Preston Allen, Phil Barrett, Dan Pemrick, Matt Veitch, Tom Wood and Chairman of the Board Ed Kinowski; Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Frank McClement, Amy Hughes, Veterans.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Pemrick, seconded by Mr. Wood, the minutes of the July 10, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. McClement distributed the Veterans Service Agency Report for July through September. Mr. McClement said that during the move to the new office, they only closed the office for two days however during these days their phones were still live and they were able to take phone calls. Mr. McClement commended his staff Paul and Megan for their help during the move.

Mr. McClement reported that there were several Veterans events held in the past few months including a ceremony in Waterford for Major Goyette who was the pilot of the Marine Corps C130 aircraft that crashed a few months ago. Mr. McClement said that they supported a free EMT course for veterans who wish to pursue a career in paramedics or EMT. A Veterans Memorial Dedication was held in Halfmoon on September 23, they also attended the quarterly VSO Conference and had the opportunity to meet with staff from the VA regional office for veterans' benefits.

Mr. McClement said that the van still continues to provide rides 4 days a week.

The balance on hand for the Veterans Trust Fund was \$49,207.94 as of the end of September. One of the veterans was aided by paying for three months of his car insurance, which was under the \$500 limit.

Mr. McClement introduced Amy Hughes to talk about Peer to Peer initiatives. Mrs. Hughes passed out a new business card that was just created listing emergency contact numbers that Veterans may need. She will begin passing this card out to veterans this week. Mrs. Hughes said that they hold a coffee night every Tuesday night at Saratoga Coffee Traders in Saratoga Springs. They have also revamped the vets and pets program, getting companion animals for veterans. Mrs. Hughes said that the new office space has been a great help for her program and holding events. She said that she was contacted by Mr. Stephan Wolfert, army veteran and writer of the one man play Cry Havoc. Mr. Wolfert obtained grant funding and is doing a program for veterans who struggle with PTSD. The program is called Decruit and they meet for three hours every Thursday night for seven weeks at the Veterans Office. The last night, October 26 will be open to the public and each of the 13 participating veterans will perform a small piece of drama to do with their time in service.

Mr. McClement said that the October Honor our Deceased Veterans event will be honoring David A. Seelow from the Town of Providence.

Mr. McClement read three thank you cards from the families of veterans helped by the Veterans Service Agency.

Mr. Wright said that a copy of the trust fund regulation changes was distributed to committee members. Changes refine some of the guidelines on how funds are distributed and what the limits are. Mr. McClement said that they had previously talked about doing scholarships and it was decided that scholarships should be done as a special initiative and left out of the Trust Fund Regulations. Definitions were refined for Veterans, family members, dependents and residency. "Bad Paper" veterans will be eligible to receive grant assistance on a case by case basis upon recommendation from the VSA and committee vote.

It was proposed prior that grant eligibility amount limits would be increased however Mr. McClement said that the regulations already allow for an increase on a case by case basis with a committee vote. Mr. McClement said that Mrs. Hughes is involved with a local church organization known as FEAST. A lot of the churches are constantly receiving requests from people in need looking for cash assistance and unfortunately some churches are being taken advantage of by individuals looking for assistance at multiple churches, the churches got together and formed the organization in a way monitor needs and contribution amounts. Mr. McClement said that they can implement some of their guidelines for grant disbursement. Grants for partial coverage of an emergency will need proof of ability to cover the difference, grants granted will be disbursed directly to the source of the need, for example utility company or auto repair shop. Grants will only be dispersed directly to grantee at the recommendation of Veterans Director and Committee Chair.

Mr. Wright said that Mr. Dorsey has a copy of the proposed changes. If any committee member would like any changes made upon review of the proposed they should let Mr. Wright know, it is anticipated that it will be brought for a vote at the next Veterans Committee meeting.

Mr. Wright said that there are two events coming up. Veterans Assistance Night on October 11 and 6th Annual Revolutionary Run on November 4. Mr. McClement said that over 35 organizations have signed up for the Veterans Assistance Night and said that they will also have break-out sessions throughout the night in partnership with the Veterans Business Council at the Chamber. One session will be on Veterans Entrepreneurial training opportunities for veterans. Other sessions include Tricare and benefits. Local veteran Chris Sgambati has been invited to attend and will be presented with a plaque for his service in WWII, his service to the community and the Honor Deceased Veterans Ceremonies he attends each month.

Mr. Wright said that they are looking for volunteers to help with the Veterans run. Mr. McClement said that that registration begins at 8:30am and the run begins at 10am. There will be an opening ceremony before the race. Volunteers can show up any time after 7:30am.

Registration for the race is open online, anyone that does not want to run but would like to support the organization can also donate via the online registration website.

A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Veitch, to approve grant funding to pay for the costs associated with the transfer of a veterans CDL license from South Carolina to New York. Unanimous.

Mr. McClement said that they were contacted by Lisa Scaccia in Employment in Training regarding the veteran, the CDL will allow the veteran to be able to look for employment. An exact cost is not available at this time, Mr. McClement said the dollar range would be approximately \$168-\$300. The Veteran currently lives in the Gansevoort area.

On a motion was made by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Barrett, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board