



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes – February 27, 2024

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, Dave Mangan (VSO), Rob Ettinger, Dan Benjamin, Dale Findlay, Marc Young, , Joe Dellolio, Councilor Dombroski (TC Liaison)

Absent: Kristi Yentile, Marion Dennehy, Bill Curran, Chris Olsen

Review/Approval of January Meeting Minutes-vote required: Motion by Joe, to approve January minutes, and second by Dale. The vote was unanimous for approval.

Members of the Public may Speak: no one in attendance.

VSO February 2024 Report and Veterans Coffee: The Veterans monthly food and dry goods support program was held last Wednesday, February 21st behind the senior center. Twenty-Seven applicants received food selections from the Greater Boston Food bank assembled by volunteers from Wakefield and the surrounding communities of Stoneham, Saugus, Melrose, North Andover and the Melrose fire Dept. As I have mentioned and reiterated in the past, that:

- If any Veteran, spouse, or immediate family member of a Veteran would like to participate in this program, and to be included in the drive thru and pick up, please call our office for further information 781-246-6377

The flags for Memorial Day have arrived and are stored away.

VA is expanding health care eligibility to millions of Veterans — including all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11 — years earlier than called for by the PACT Act this expansion of VA health care eliminates the phased-in approach called for by the PACT Act — meaning that millions of Veterans are becoming eligible for VA health care up to eight years earlier than written into law. This is a critical step forward because Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than non-enrolled Veterans, and VA hospitals have dramatically outperformed non-VA hospitals in [overall quality ratings](#) and [patient satisfaction ratings](#). Additionally, VA health care is often [more affordable](#) than non-VA health care for Veterans.

The Veterans coffee social was held on Saturday February 17th at the Senior Center 30 Converse St. Wakefield. We had three speakers. Andrew Aculina the Clear path representative who discussed the services for Veterans returning from active duty and the many programs available for employment, reconnecting Veterans and their families to their communities, and benefits. Linda Malcolm from the Room to Write program who introduced the Veterans to the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of memoir writing, poetry, and documenting their stories. The room to write monthly program is held at the Senior Center and is open to Seniors and Veterans. Brian Fox, one of the organizers for the upcoming



Fourth of July parade to let the Veterans know of the need to sign up to participate and help give them an idea of how many would be attending and the specifics on parking etc.

The next Veterans Coffee social will be held at the Wakefield Elks Club 63 Bay State Road on Saturday March 16th at 10 am. The Elks are having a Veterans Breakfast for us and will be donating to the relief fund.

We have one new participant in the Chapter 115 program and three new members in the monthly food bank.

We have one Disabled Veteran who has asked that we help from the Veterans relief fund with a one-time assist on her fuel heating bill as she had been laid off from her part time job and has fallen behind in her ability to cover the payment. Senior Citizens delivered 186 gallons of oil at a discount rate of \$3.59 per gal. for a final cost of \$667.74. This will help to get her through the remaining winter months hopefully. And as a senior citizen she has also filed for the "LEO" program which she is eligible for fuel assistance going forward.

With the approval of the VAB I will send the invoice to the accounting office to pay it directly to Senior Citizens Oil co. **Motion to approve by Rob, second from Marc, to have this bill for approximately \$668 paid for out of the Wakefield Veteran's Relief Fund. Vote was unanimous.**

As I have mentioned 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.

Items for Discussion:

- Three VAB openings on the board – If you know anyone, invite them to contact Sherri to apply.
- JROTC support for Memorial Day
 - Firing detail – JROTC does not have firing skills
- American Legion support for Memorial Day – Firing Detail, Wakefield Legion has retired, aged-out – can we check with surrounding Legions? Sam Stella would join Dale at the WSSC, but we would need a third. As for other town ceremonies, we need to send a formal letter to the Legion.

- Local military honor guard units – firing detail (DD Form 2536 - Request for Armed Forces Participation in Public Event – Non-Aviation) – Two Humvees, also Dale to ask for use of Reading Rifle Club’s cannon, which he can fire.
- For Veteran’s Day - Paul would like us to fill out an application for Wakefield to be a Veteran’s Day Regional Site form to the VA’s Veteran’s Day National Committee. It essentially represents a “pin on the map” for the Town of Wakefield with the VA. **Paul moved, Dale seconded, a vote to submit this application by the VAB. Vote was unanimous.**

Upcoming events:

- Monday, March 18, 2024, 6:00-7:30, Volunteer Appreciation Event at Albion Cultural Exchange – Paul collected attendees for VAB to provide to Sherri
- Monday, May 27, 2024, Memorial Day, at 1:00pm, at the War Memorial on the Lower Common. – Rob to reach out to Sherri, Dennis Fazio about reserving the space, and GMS as inclement weather plan. TC Dombroski to reach out to WCAT or DPW for chairs and speakers/podium/etc
- June 2024 Flag Day, Friday, June 14, 2024, at 6:00pm at the War Memorial on the Lower Common- Rob to reach out to Sherri, Dennis Fazio about reserving the space, and GMS as inclement weather plan. TC Dombroski to reach out to WCAT or DPW for chairs and speakers/podium/etc
- June 2024 Change of Command of the Commander of the USS Constitution
- Wednesday, August 7, 2024 Purple Heart Day – we need to get purple lights setup on the memorial the day before and day of – Dave M to take care of it
- Can we apply for a WAA Travelling Museum visit? Maybe in late October or November?
- Rescheduled Town Day? TC Dombroski stated it will be Saturday, September 21st (rain date 9/28)

Member’s Report (around the horn):

- Communications and social media
- Secretary’s report
 - None
- Vice-chair’s report
- Chair's Report
 - *Thank you to Rabbi Hersh and the members of Temple Emmanuel for hosting the annual “Four Chaplains” tribute.*
 - *Memorial Day Invitations:*
 - *Chaplain*
 - *WMHS Music Director – Chorus/Soloist National Anthem and Burglars “TAPS”*
 - *Wakefield Fire Department – Bell – tribute for the fallen*
 - *Readers of the Fallen*

- *Boy Scout Troop 701 - Color Guard*
- *Wakefield Girl Scouts – Wreath*
- *Communications of note from Cheryl Poppe, Senior Adviser, Veteran Owned Business Development and Partnerships:*
 - *Virtual Business Opportunity Session* with Schneider Electric on Thursday, February 29th at 3 PM (VA Direct Access Program)
 - *Military Women’s Symposium - The Valkyrie Project*, being held March 7-8 at MIT Lincoln Labs with in-person and virtual options

Town Council Liaison’s comments: (i) Been following up on the proper illumination of the flag and signage at Vets Field, (ii) Town Day will be Saturday September 21st (28th rain date), (iii) Communicating with Wakefield’s Economic Development Director to allocate some of the Town’s remaining ARPA funds to make grants and other funding to Veteran-owned businesses in Wakefield, or for people who want to open a Veteran-Owned business in town. We can also use this as an opportunity to also promote the Town’s Veteran-Owned Businesses.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 6:30pm via Zoom - Town has offered hybrid meeting locations with video accessibility for CY 2024.

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

Adjournment (motion to adjourn): Motion to adjourn by Dale, seconded by Dan to adjourn. The vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Rob Ettinger, Secretary, VAB