

Veterans' Committee
July 6, 2011 – 2:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman M. Johnson; Supervisors Barrett, Collyer, Wright, Wood, and Southworth; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Andrew Davis, Veterans' Director.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Barrett the minutes of the June 6, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mrs. VanOrt gave the following update with regard to the Veterans' Concert to take place at SPAC on September 17, 2011:

The tickets, invitations, and posters will all be going to print on July 11th. The tickets will be available at Stewarts Stores in the county as well as all Town Halls beginning August 25th.

Press releases and media advisories will begin early September.

Mrs. Johnson asked who was doing the printing? Mrs. VanOrt said the color printing would be going to General Services where they will get bids for the printing costs.

Mrs. VanOrt said EMS would need to be on site. Contact has been made with the Saratoga EMS to provide that service.

Saratoga Bridges and Unlimited Potential have been contacted for an RFP for the mailing of the post cards.

Letters will be sent to Senior groups and music groups, as in the past, making it easier for them to get their tickets.

Contracts with the band assistance and the bus company are in motion.

Mrs. VanOrt said an RFP went out for a catering time of 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. or until the end of the performance for 110 to 115 people. This would include a lunch buffet consisting of sandwich platters, condiment trays, assorted salads, desserts, soda, water and coffee. The lowest bid was from Waterford Banquets at \$14/per person for a total of \$1,540. Other quotes were from the Hall of Springs at \$12/per person plus \$409.80 for fees for a total of \$1,729.80; Panza's Restaurant and Catering at \$15/per person plus a \$300 staff fee for a total of \$1,950.

A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Collyer to contract with Waterford Banquets for an amount not to exceed \$1,540 to provide catering services. Unanimous.

Mrs. VanOrt distributed a copy of the newspaper ad, invitations and the tickets for all committee members for their review.

Mr. Barrett asked if they would be done in house. Mrs. VanOrt said because it is such a large quantity they will be sent out for cutting and printing, which has been proven to be cost efficient.

Mrs. VanOrt said there would be 8 ½ x 11 posters that will be displayed in all Stewart's Stores and Town Halls as well as the County Fair.

Mr. Davis said the 400 posters have arrived for the Veterans Assistance Night, which were completed free of charge from Empire State College. One has been distributed to each Supervisors mailbox for displaying in their town hall. All of the organizations that interface with Veterans have provided lists in the county for their Korean War Veterans. A Korean War Veteran is defined as anyone who served in the Korean War zone or the waters off shore. It is expected that there will be approximately 400 Veterans honored as well as widows, if they choose.

Mr. Davis encouraged anyone who might have someone they know who was a Korean War Veteran and is not aware of the Veterans Assistance Night to contact the Veterans Office to ensure that their name is put on the list to be honored. A letter and possibly an award will be given Congressman Gibson's office and Senator McDonald's office.

Mr. Davis said he has started a group called the Saratoga Veterans Resource Initiative consisting of Mr. Davis, State Division of Veterans Affairs, Office for the Aging, Probation and anyone interfacing with Veterans, meeting every two months.

Mr. Davis gave an update on the FAVOR Program as follows: There have been 120 discount cards issued in the last two weeks to Veterans. There are approximately 100 Veterans that were not issued the card because they didn't have the right document. The Veterans office has provided on site records requests to help those people locate their discharge paper with the raised seal. This means that the national personnel records center has sent a copy to the Veteran and they are certifying that it is an exact copy of the original that DOD has on file. Once the filing goes to the County Clerk's office it is public record and State Law requires them to have at least seen the original or certified copy of the original. Mr. Davis said the other piece of this is that Congress defines a Veteran as someone who has served 180 days on duty consecutively. If there were a Reservist or Guard Member who never served for 180 days consecutively you wouldn't get a DD-214. What the County Clerk has done is if you can show that you were in the reserves, you will receive a card that has Reservist on it.

Mrs. Johnson said the media announcement for the FAVOR Program took place on July 5th at the County Complex with several Veterans in attendance.

Mrs. Johnson said discussions and recommendations continue to take place with the County Attorney, Veterans subcommittee and County Treasurer for the Veterans' Trust Fund. It is anticipated that recommendations will be presented at the August Law and Finance meeting.

Mr. Davis said the Honor Flight was a program that was started approximately five or six years ago by a Doctor in Ohio. His goal was to get all WWII Veterans to see their new memorial in Washington, D.C. The actual Charter of the organization continues beyond the WWII Veterans to the Korean War Veterans and the Vietnam Veterans. Saratoga County took six Veterans and piggybacked with Schoharie County's Honor Flight Program. The trip consisted of a full day of surprises to them including the WWII Memorial, Changing of the Guard at Arlington, and the Iwo Jima Memorial. Mr. Davis said out of this it was discovered that there are approximately 2,000 WWII Veterans in Saratoga County. Saratoga County is going to start a Chapter to piggyback on to the New York State Honor Flight organization. There are two organized trips planned for September and October.

Mr. Wright asked how the program is funded? Mr. Davis said it is completing funded by donations.

Mr. Davis said the Veterans' Van Service will be changing their way of picking Veterans up by going to a system of one pickup point in each town or village beginning January 1, 2012.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom