

Veterans' Committee Minutes
May 7, 2012 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman M. Johnson; Supervisors Rowland, Lucia, Hargrave, Wright, Richardson, Sausville, Yepsen, Collyer, Southworth, Wood, and Lewza; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Andrew Davis, Frank McClement, Veterans Agency; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Gene Corsale, Veteran Volunteer; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Mr. Hargrave the minutes of the April 2, 2012 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Davis presented a monthly status report from the Veterans' Agency with regard to Disability Compensation for Veterans. He said in order to qualify for any VA benefit you have to have an honorable discharge and it has to be shown that the individual was injured in active duty service.

Mr. Davis said there is approximately \$52 million in compensation that flows into the county on an annual basis for Veterans who are receiving this benefit. It will pay someone from \$136 a month to almost \$3,000 a month for injuries and illnesses.

Mrs. Johnson asked how many claims come through the County Veterans office. Mr. Davis said they serve approximately 7,000 active clients on an annual basis, which are approximately 4 people per day. There is no backlog in the Veterans office he said. When a claim comes in it is completed the next day. The VA has 890,000 backlog claims and New York City alone has 18,000, with the average wait time for a claim 720 days.

Mrs. Johnson said there was a fire in an apartment building in Halfmoon where Mr. Strojil, a Veteran from Afghanistan was living. He and his girlfriend were awakened and went to all of the other apartments to get the other people out of the building, saving lives. Mrs. Johnson said Mr. Strojil will be honored at the May Board of Supervisors Meeting. Mr. Strojil came to the US with his family in 1997 and was a graduate from Shenendehowa High School in June 2001. He was in the NY National Guard between 2001 and 2007 and served in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom from April 2004 to April 2005. Mr. Strojil was awarded the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M Device and the Army Service Ribbon. During the fire Mr. Strojil lost all his belongings, including his military medals. Mr. Davis is in the process of ordering all the medals that were lost and they will be given to Mr. Strojil at a later date, as it takes almost a year to get them, she said.

Mr. Dorsey said two months ago the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution requesting home rule legislation designating the Rt. 9P Bridge over Fish Creek as the Saratoga County Veterans Memorial Bridge. This legislation has been introduced in the Senate and Assembly and the next step is for this committee and the Board to adopt a resolution requesting passage of the specific bills. The Senate bill is S6967 and the Assembly bill is A9835.

A motion was made by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Mr. Wright to request passage of Senate Bill S6967 and Assembly Bill A9867 designating the Rt. 9P Bridge over the Fish Creek as the Saratoga County Veterans Memorial Bridge. Unanimous.

Mr. Dorsey said in 2009 the County and the Board of Supervisors requested home rule legislation requesting Rt. 29 from the State Military Museum, Saratoga Springs to Schuylerville, and Rt.4 through Schuylerville to the Village of Waterford as the Saratoga County Veterans Memorial Highway. A problem that arose was a section of Rt.29 from Henning Road in Saratoga Springs down to the Village of Schuylerville had already been designated the General Philip Schuyler Memorial Highway pursuant to previous home rule legislation requested by the county in 1996. That particular bill has been modified to take out Rt. 29 and as the bill currently sits in the Senate and Assembly right now it would just designate Rt. 4 from the Village of Schuylerville to the Village of Waterford as the Saratoga County Veterans Memorial Highway. Mr. Dorsey said if the committee is interested in designating Rt. 4 as the Saratoga County Veterans Memorial Highway it would require another resolution requesting passage of Senate Bill S2160-A and Assembly Bill A04739A.

A motion was made by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve a resolution to request passage of Senate Bill S2160-A and Assembly Bill A0-4739A designating Rt. 4 as the Saratoga County Veterans Memorial Highway. Unanimous.

Mrs. Johnson requested Mr. Davis to confirm May 24, 2012 for the committee to Visit the Saratoga War Horse Program.

Mr. Richardson said on August 11th at 2:00 p.m. at the Mechanicville High School Auditorium approximately 50 people who were killed in action during WWII from the Mechanicville School District will be recognized at a special ceremony.

Mrs. Johnson said the Battle of the Bands event will most likely take place in September, and a venue is currently being pursued.

Mr. Davis announced September 16th at noon as the date for the Schuylerville fundraiser for the Veterans Trust Fund.

On a motion made by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Mr. Wright the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom