

Veterans Committee Minutes
May 8, 2017 – 2:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Mo Wright; Supervisors Preston Allen, Phil Barrett, Dan Pemrick, Matt Veitch and Tom Wood; Chad Cooke, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Frank McClement, Veterans; Emil Baker, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Veitch, the minutes of the February 6, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. McClement distributed the Veterans Service Agency Report covering January through April 2017. Some of the new events included an Office of Mental Health Stakeholders conference in February and Inter-agency awareness day in March. Mr. McClement reached out to Beacon Pointe Assisted Living Facility to see what help can be provided for their residents. In April they participated in a WWI Commemoration Ceremony at the Division of Military and Naval Affairs, and Yellow Ribbon Day in the Town of Clifton Park.

The balance on hand of the Veterans Trust Fund is currently \$47,060.38. Grants recently provided by the Trust Fund included \$500 to the widow of a veteran and \$183.63 to a veteran who needed help with the cost of repairs to his vehicle.

The Honor our Deceased Veteran Ceremony for May will be honoring Town of Hadley Veteran Charles Shuman Sr., June will be Town of Greenfield – Howard Older and July the Town of Ballston - Donald Champagne.

Mr. McClement gave a brief update on the upcoming office move to a new location. The lease is out for signature, contracts for the build out are moving forward, they are negotiating the costs of paving with the property owner. DPW will be taking care of striping and signage to keep the costs down. Mr. McClement is working with a potential contractor for phone and data cabling. Unfortunately a delay was caused due to the previous tenant not removing all of their belongings from the space in a timely manner.

Mr. Wright introduced Mr. Emil Baker. Mr. Baker distributed several flyers from the various organizations he is involved with. Mr. Baker is a volunteer with the Department of Defense and their program is Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, he has 5,000 troops in his district who he briefs annually regarding their rights for employment, reemployment and how they should be treated by employers. They also conduct presentations, talk to and educate employers. Part of their program is recognizing employers who are doing amazing work in supporting veterans. Employees can also nominate their employer for outstanding support. The website www.esgr.mil provides additional information on their programs and what they offer.

Mr. Baker is also a counselor for SCORE providing free and confidential business mentoring, they hold a free course called Boots to Business to aid military members, spouses and family members exploring business ownership or other self-employment opportunities. They also work with the Saratoga Chamber of Commerce as part of the Veterans Business Council.

Mr. Baker is a member of Northeast regional Community Relations & Outreach of the American Red Cross. Mr. Baker attends all of their yellow ribbon events. The American Red Cross also

helps families with programs that are available through the Red Cross and other state and federal agencies. Mr. Baker distributed a flyer regarding a free app from the Red Cross called Hero Care App. This app is designed to help members of the military, veterans and their families identify and access both emergency and non-emergency Red Cross services. Mr. Baker also mentioned an app from NYS from the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding veterans' benefits. Many veterans are not aware of the benefits available to them. Mr. Barrett said that some school districts, including the district covering Clifton Park, provide additional tax benefits for veterans.

Mr. Baker commended Amy Hughes from the Peer to Peer Program on her hard work.

A motion was made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Veitch, to authorize the Chairman to sign a resolution for Support of the Guard and Reserve. Unanimous.

Mr. Baker brought a framed sample copy of the resolution to the Committee meeting. The resolution does not hold the County to any legal obligation. The resolution has been passed by Rensselaer County and is also going through the State Legislature. Mr. Barrett said that the Board of Supervisors is fantastic with the support they provide to veterans.

Mr. Wright said that he has spoken with Mr. McClement and they would like to refine the guidelines regarding grants from the Veterans Trust Fund. Some of the areas they would like to look at include eligibility for disbursement, grant amounts, scholarship funds and future acceptable uses. Mr. Wright said that they will be working on this in the upcoming months and asked the committee to forward any ideas they have to him or Mr. McClement. Mr. Wright said that they would like to get the word out about the trust fund and get funds out to veterans and the community where it is needed.

On a motion was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Pemrick, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board