

VETERANS' COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 3, 2009 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Barrett; Supervisors Hunter, M. Johnson, Wright, Yepsen and Jenkins; Robert Mitchell, Veterans' Director; Bud Mazurek, Exec. Dir. Of Sara. Cty. Rural Preservation Company; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Hunter the minutes of the December 8, 2008 meeting were approved by the following vote: Ayes Barrett, Hunter, Wright and Yepsen; Abstained – M. Johnson.

Mr. Barrett announced the appointment of Ms. Yepsen as the Vice-Chairman of the committee.

Ms. Yepsen said Mr. Mazurek has been working closely with her on the "Guardian House for Homeless Female Veterans". There are approximately a dozen homeless female veterans that have been identified in the capital region.

Ms. Yepsen said all Veterans need help, but we are specifically targeting Iraq and Afghanistan homeless women. It has also been suggested that a shelter be established for homeless women with children

Ms. Yepsen said the search for a new shelter is moving forward with several potential site visits as well as meetings with potential funders. A request has been put in for a \$50,000 corporate fund.

Mr. Mazurek said there are member item applications to local legislators that have expressed their support. The biggest piece is that the VA has a capital grant that will fund approximately 60% of the project. The biggest challenge is finding a property, hopefully in this community, that could satisfy the need without a substantial amount of renovation and cost.

Mr. Mazurek said he has to have site control in place before applying for the grant. This is an agreement with the seller that if the Preservation Company is able to raise the funds, they will sell it for a given price.

Mr. Mazurek said there is 100% VA support and a letter of support has been written, which is another important step in the grant process.

Mrs. Johnson asked if the home would need to be in Ballston Spa? Mr. Mazurek said it would be ideal as services that are currently offered to male veterans could be offered to female veterans if they are in close proximity; however, if a home can be found anywhere in the county, we will make it work, he said.

Mr. Barrett asked what would be considered a suitable house? Mr. Mazurek said ideally it would be a place that is currently or was at one time some sort of a home for seniors, a multi-unit home.

Mr. Mazurek said phase II would be, once this facility is up and running, to look to establish a home for women with children

Ms. Yepsen said the home is to be a transitional home, so there would be training and support services.

Mr. Barrett said anything that the committee can do to support the project and further the efforts, we will certainly do that, whether it would be attending fundraisers or lending support to grant applications.

Ms. Ciulla said the contract for the Deceased Veterans Ceremony Videographer expired in January. Requests for bids were sent out and are due February 6th. Three bids have currently been received.

Mr. Barrett asked that when the bids are received that they be distributed to all committee members for their review before the next committee meeting.

Mr. Barrett said there are funds in the budget this year for another Veterans Concert.

Ms. Ciulla said she has made contact with the Army Field Band and the Airforce Band of Liberty with the following available dates:

Airforce Band of Liberty - September 26th in the evening or September 27th in the afternoon.

Army Field Band - September 25th in the evening

A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Ms. Yepsen to approve the Army Field Band Concert at Saratoga Performing Arts Center on September 25, 2009. Unanimous.

Mr. Mitchell said he is working on obtaining how many WWII Veterans are in the county. Currently, he has approximately 600 confirmed WWII Veterans. The October Job Fair and World War II Veterans Ceremony will be held on October 26th at the City Center.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom