

## Veterans' Committee Minutes

February 3, 2011 – 2:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman M. Johnson; Supervisors Barrett, Collyer, Wright, Yepsen, and Southworth; Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Josie Miner, Andrew Davis, Veterans; Gene Corsale, Veterans Volunteer; Jennifer Van Ort, Publication Specialist; Kathy Marchione, Kate Jeanson, County Clerk.

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

**On a motion made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Wright the minutes of the October 13, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously.**

Chairman M. Johnson announced the appointment of Mo Wright as Vice Chairman of the Veterans' Committee.

Mrs. Johnson asked that Ms. Van Ort look into what bands would be available for the Military Band Concert to take place on a September afternoon at SPAC, and report back at the next Veterans' Committee meeting.

Mrs. Johnson appointed a subcommittee consisting of Mr. Collyer, Mr. Wright and herself for the purpose of addressing issues that might need to be addressed in a timely manner throughout the year.

Mr. Davis distributed copies of his proposal for the Veteran's Assistance Night to be held on October 4, 2011 between 5 – 10 p.m. at the City Center in Saratoga Springs.

The tentative Agenda is as follows:

Doors open for participants to setup at 4:00 p.m.

Beginning 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the upper level there would be two briefings, with section 1 geared towards ages 18 – 55 (i.e., Education, Employment, etc) and section two geared toward ages 55 and older (i.e., Agent Orange, Pension, Health Care, etc.)

The purpose of the briefings would be to get a snapshot of what we are talking about and then be able to go downstairs to the room that is setup with booths for the fair and be able to talk to the experts about the benefit in more depth as well as in more privacy if there was a personal case.

Beginning at 8:00 p.m. in the upper level the room will be open to approximately 500 people to honor the Koran War Veterans of Saratoga County. This is the one group that we do not have a county medal for and one group that hasn't been honored in mass, he

said. Congressman Gibson has agreed to be a part of the ceremony if available that night, as well as Mr. McDonald and the Veterans committee to honor a group that has given much.

Mr. Davis said he would like to do an event that would actually provide a service so when Veterans' come in, they walk away with something. The VA has volunteered to do on-site healthcare enrollment where when a Veteran walks in with a DD-214 they can leave with a Dr.'s appointment as well as an ID card that will arrive in the mail a few days later giving them Healthcare with the VA. Mr. Davis, as well as other counselors, will be on site to begin claims for Veterans.

Mr. Davis said he would like to have assigned seating arrangements for the Korean War Veterans' to provide a professional and efficient program.

Mr. Davis said for the briefing portion he is looking at using outside presenters, bringing in the experts. The VA at the Federal level has a budget to send people to talk about their own benefits.

Mr. Wright asked if Korean War medals would be given? Mr. Davis said, yes.

Mr. Collyer asked if there was an idea of how many medals would be given out? Mr. Davis said an order would be placed for five hundred medals. He currently has a list of 300 Korean War Veterans.

Mrs. Johnson asked that all committee members mark their calendars for this event as the committee will be playing a part in the Veterans' Assistance Night.

Mrs. Marchione said the Favor program is a tremendous program, not just with the County Clerk's office, but with the Board of Supervisors and Veterans' office. A copy of the logo design "Return the Favor" was distributed to all committee members.

Mrs. Marchione said they are ready to go out and speak with area businesses in the county. Their part is to give a percentage off of their service.

Mrs. Marchione said the County Clerk's office is going to begin to work with Professional Associations throughout Saratoga County and the Veterans' office is going to be working with Veteran's Associations. The Board of Supervisors will be working with representatives in their communities to contact businesses to be a part of the program. The site design will go through the Board of Supervisors, and the project will be brought forward to businesses just as soon as applications are duplicated.

Mrs. Yepsen asked if other counties are doing this? Mrs. Marchione said, yes, there have been many counties that have done this. By the research that we have been doing we are learning from others on ways to do things better, quicker and easier because they have already walked the road.

Mrs. Marchione said the Veteran will receive an ID Card when they file their DD-214. If they have already filed, they will be eligible to receive a picture ID Card to present to participating merchants who will then honor the cardholders by providing a discount on purchases and services.

Mr. Collyer asked if the program was with Saratoga County merchants only? Mrs. Marchione said, yes.

Mrs. Marchione said a start date for the program has not been established yet.

Mrs. Johnson itemized additional events throughout the year as follows:

#### Veterans Day Ceremony at the Cemetery

The Annual Yellow Ribbon Day Ceremony will be held at the Wilton Elks, on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> where Mrs. Johnson will be master of ceremony, and Congressman Gibson will be a guest speaker at the event.

#### Opening of the Guardian House

Mrs. Johnson said she has made a phone call to Mr. Mazurek, Executive Director of the Rural Preservation Co., and is waiting for a reply back to confirm his availability to speak to the committee with regard to the opening of the Guardian House.

Mrs. Yepsen said the Veterans Association grant has been received and the Ballston Spa Planning Board has approved the plans.

Mrs. Southworth said the Special Needs Permit was received from the Ballston Planning Board. The schedule is in place for the rehabilitation, and the projects that need to be completed in order to receive the Certificate of Occupancy for the project.

Mrs. Johnson said The Tuskegee Airmen was a group of pilots during WWII who fought very bravely in the war providing a lot of support for the other airmen. There is a resident in Saratoga County that was one of the airmen, Clarence Dart, who resides at the Wesley Nursing Home. Mrs. Johnson suggested that the Veterans Committee members go to Wesley Nursing Home to pay Mr. Dart a visit and present a proclamation to him from Saratoga County. Mrs. Johnson said she would be open to any suggestions from the committee.

Mrs. Johnson said there would be other things going on in the county such as the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Civil War, 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Pearl Harbor. These are all appropriate events for the Veterans Committee to be a part of, she said.

Mr. Corsale said the Batchlerville Bridge is soon going to be put into service after its renovation. He suggested considering renaming the bridge the "Veterans' Memorial

Bridge". This would be a first in the area and would add to the great things that the Saratoga County Veterans' Committee and Supervisors do for Veterans.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Sansom