

Veterans Committee Minutes  
August 5, 2013 3:30 p.m.

Present: Mary Ann Johnson, Chair; Supervisors Collyer, Hargrave, Richardson, Southworth, Raymond, Sausville and Yepsen; Ryan Moore, Mgt. Analyst; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Felipe Moon, Veterans Director; Bob Mitchell.

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

**On a motion by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Mr. Richardson the minutes of the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting were unanimously approved.**

Mr. Moon asked if there were any questions regarding his executive summary report. Being none, he gave a couple highlights from this report. He said he is working with NYRA on the Veterans Day at the Races scheduled for August 28<sup>th</sup>. He said planning for the 5K run is off to a good start. He received support from the Chamber of Commerce, YMCA, the local American Legion and the Hudson Crossing Park. The flyer has been created and will be sent out.

Mr. Moon said the Saratoga Chamber of Commerce will be the lead for sponsors for the 5K Run and the Southern Saratoga Chamber will be the lead for a fund drive that will occur in late Fall.

Mrs. Johnson said that August 28<sup>th</sup> is Veterans Day at the Race Track. Amy Hughes, the Peer to Peer Program Coordinator, will be at this event manning a table with information about the Peer to Peer Program. She said the details for this event are still being developed by Ed Lewi Associates and will be sent out as soon as they are complete.

Mr. Moore said the bill renaming a portion of a highway has been passed by both Houses and is awaiting the Governor's signature. He said he would keep Mrs. Johnson updated as he receives more information.

Mrs. Johnson said that the only change in the Financial Report regarding the Veterans Trust Fund was a \$200 in memory donation. She said she expects to see some big changes with the 5K race and the fund raiser. She is hoping to see a sizable increase by the end of the year. Mr. Moon added that late in the day Friday he received a \$1,000 commitment from a sponsor for the run. Mrs. Southworth suggested sending the flyer for the run to the school districts. Mrs. Johnson said there is a kid's run as well scheduled for this day.

Mrs. Johnson said there will need to be insurance for the 5K Race and she will be meeting with Mr. Dorsey to go over what will be needed for Washington County as some of the race goes into that county and for the bounce house.

Mrs. Johnson said the Honor a Deceased Veterans schedule for the remaining of the year is as follows: September – Providence; October – Milton; November – City of Saratoga Springs; December – Hadley.

Mrs. Johnson began the discussion on the Honor a Deceased Veteran Program. She said a couple of months ago she approached Mr. Moon about changing it to Honor Our Hero's Program so that living veterans may be included. She said some of the reasons for bringing up that change is that some towns, such as Edinburg, hasn't had a ceremony in five (5) years and the Town of Day has only had one (1). This month there was someone scheduled and they couldn't get a veteran so she thought maybe it's time to include both. There have been Supervisors who have asked why this is just for Deceased Veterans. She thought to have one program and leave it up to the Town whether they honor a deceased or a living Veteran when it is their turn. Each Town would receive the same number of turns on the schedule. She did go to speak to Gene Corsale who has been a part of the program since it started in 1999. He thinks it is a great idea to honor live veterans. Mrs. Johnson said she reads in the paper of all the great things veterans do and the awards they get and they don't get recognition until they are gone. She said they really aren't changing anything. Those who would like to do a deceased vet can. Those who would like to honor a live vet can. Mrs. Johnson opened the discussion.

Mrs. Southworth said she was concerned because she had gotten a couple of calls from residents worried about feelings being hurt. How do you choose one over the other; and, if there are two friends that both have great accomplishments one is chosen, the other isn't, this could make hard feelings.

Mr. Hargrave said he hadn't heard from his residents. He said he thought that at some point down the road, the program was going to have to change. He thinks this is better. If someone puts their life on the line a thank you wouldn't hurt.

Mr. Richardson said he has not heard from anyone and he is okay with whatever the Committee decides. He said he has a list of 70 deceased veterans that he can honor as well as another 30 that are alive. Mrs. Johnson said the Towns could chose to take turns. When it's their turn the Town could chose to do a deceased veteran and the next time a veteran that is alive.

Mr. Collyer said that he is concerned what the families would think. Why are they doing one versus the other. He said he would have to be careful. He asked if the Committee would consider doing the ceremony every other month. Mrs. Johnson said her feeling would be no because we have so many veterans now that we can't get to because we only do one a month. Mr. Collyer said he would like the program to stay the way it is.

Mrs. Southworth asked if some of the towns were having a hard time finding someone to honor or is it that we aren't planning well enough ahead. She said Mr. Lucia couldn't be there and he has some very strong feelings so that is why she is asking. So is it that we as Supervisors aren't planning far enough ahead to get the information or is it that we don't have a deceased veteran. Mr. Moon asked if each municipality has a different way of coming up with a deceased veteran. Mrs. Southworth said correct. Mr. Moon suggested the Towns come up with a list of those veterans who could be honored. He said his office has been pressed for time to put together a top notch ceremony. He said it should be up to the Supervisors whether they would like to honor a deceased veteran or one that is still alive. He thinks the program should be opened up. He used the Clarence Dart ceremony as an example of why it should be opened to both deceased and live veterans.

Mr. Hargrave said he would like a schedule go out a year in advance. He said when he is approached a month before to come up with a name, that is impossible. Mrs. Johnson said that notice should be given at least 3 to 4 months in advance. Mr. Hargrave said he had to cancel because he wasn't given enough time. Mr. Moon came up with a check list and a time line. Mrs. Southworth said that more time needs to be given to the Supervisors, at least 120 days in advance. She said like Mr. Richardson she has a list.

Mrs. Johnson opened the discussion to all the Supervisors in attendance. Mrs. Raymond said that larger communities have too many veterans but communities like hers which is smaller and has a different kind of population with the camps and people who retire there. It is a different kind of dynamics. She said the travel is an issue especially coming from Edinburg in the winter months. Getting time off because of the time of the ceremony is also an issue for some of her residents.

Mr. Sausville said he likes the idea of honoring the living as well as the deceased.

Mrs. Yepsen said that it was her understanding that these ceremonies are on a rotating basis. So Supervisors should know 3 to 4 years out what month they are assigned to. Mrs. Johnson said generally a schedule goes out at the beginning of the year. Mr. Hargrave said that if someone cancels or drops out that changes the schedule. Mrs. Yepsen said the last time she honored a deceased veteran that family wanted a year's notice because family was coming in from all over the Country. She said she would appreciate the year's notice. She said she believes the program at the County level should remain a deceased veteran's ceremony. She said the City of Saratoga Springs has honored Gene Corsale a number of times. She said with honoring the live veterans there would be competition and friction with one another. She said it's not fair to put them in that situation.

Mrs. Johnson introduced Robert Mitchell who retired from the Veterans Director position. He said he doesn't like the idea of changing the program. He said you would be opening a can of worms if you open the

program to live veterans and choosing one over the other and he is against that. He said he would always put out a year in advance a schedule of which Town was which month. He put the program together in May of 1999 with the first ceremony being in August of 1999. He said Gene Corsale is a very good friend of his and thinks he should be commended for his service and all he has done, but do something separate for him and those like him. Keep the Deceased Veterans Program just that for deceased veterans.

Mr. Sausville asked if more than one veteran could be honored a month. Mr. Hargrave said that he had honored brothers. Mr. Moon said whatever the Committee decides is what will happen.

Mr. Moon said he would make the changes to his schedule. Mrs. Johnson said that the schedule should be sent out at the beginning of the year and re-sent out quarterly with any necessary changes. Mrs. Southworth also asked that consideration be given to the northern Towns and the Towns that are further away so that they may receive "better weather" months.

Mrs. Johnson said she told Mr. Lucia that no decision would be made at this meeting because he could not attend the meeting. Mr. Kinowski couldn't be at this meeting as well. This item will go back on the agenda for September.

Mrs. Johnson said that Ms. Yepsen asked for a couple of minutes to talk about the Commemorative Partner Program. Ms. Yepsen told the committee about the program and requested a meeting with Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Moon. She said the program is for commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War. New York State will be participating and the Governor is asking Counties to get involved to thank and honor the Veterans of the Vietnam War. Mrs. Johnson said she will forward the information to the Committee members and to the County Administrator because it will require County funds for holding events and she doesn't know the County's policy on that.

**On a motion by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Mrs. Southworth the meeting was unanimously adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela A. Hargrave, Clerk