

Veterans Committee Minutes
June 4, 2014 - 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Wright; Supervisors Allen, Barrett, Jenkins, Kinowski, Lucia, Martin and Lawler; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Martin the minutes of the May 5, 2014 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. McClement gave a brief overview of the Veterans Office Operations Summary report as follows: For the month of May eleven new claims were submitted on behalf of clients with 31 scheduled appointments conducted and sixteen walk-in clients were served. In coordination with the Department of Social Services, in-service training has been scheduled for DSS Staff on Veterans benefits for June 13th, July 18th and July 25th.

Mr. McClement said with regard to the Veterans Van his office provided 160 rides for the month of May.

Mr. McClement said the Veterans Trust Fund has a current balance of \$16,992.05 after a donation of \$20 in May, with no disbursements. He said there is a Support Services Grant for Veterans families that was recently awarded to the VET Help organization in Ballston Spa. They are administering their grant, which allows them flexibility to provide help in such areas as getting caught up on rent, vehicle repairs and anything that would help to keep a Veteran from being homeless. He said this is why the county has not seen many recent requests from the County's trust fund.

Mr. Martin asked if VET Help was a private organization. Mr. McClement said VET Help is a branch of the Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company, a not for profit.

Mr. McClement said the Honor Flight program is also a not for profit organization that flies WWII Veterans to the Memorial in Washington D.C. The Veterans office helps to support that organization by facilitating applications and providing transportation to and from the Albany Airport for Saratoga County Veterans that are going on the trip. The next Honor Flight is scheduled for June 7th where 10 Saratoga County Veterans will be transported to the Albany County Airport and back. The next Honor Flight is scheduled for September.

Mr. McClement said the County has a Peer to Peer mentorship program that has been in existence for approximately two years and was made possible by a grant through the NYS Mental Health Department. An event is scheduled for June 20th at the Saratoga City Center entitled "Comedy Warriors Gala". Comedy Warriors is a film that was made by filmmakers from Saratoga Springs with young veterans who have suffered serious trauma in combat, as a

therapeutic process, trained with worldwide renowned comedians, and a documentary was created. Mr. McClement said all proceeds that are netted from the event will benefit the Saratoga County Veterans Trust Fund. He said it is hoped that this will increase exposure and support for the Peer to Peer Program.

The following evening on June 21st is the night for the Veterans where DiDonna's has offered accommodations for the Comedian and will be hosting a comedy show. Free tickets are being given to participants in the Peer to Peer Program and any Veteran in the County that would like to attend.

Mr. McClement said the Veterans office is pursuing the idea of partnering with the County jail by bringing the mentorship program into the Jail. Sgt. Rodriguez, at the County Jail, is a Veteran and he has wanted to do a Veterans group at the jail with Veterans that are currently incarcerated, bringing them together and talking to them about benefits.

Mr. McClement said the Honor a Deceased Veterans Ceremony for June is for Louis J. Pasquarell Sr. of Clifton Park. Mr. Pasquarell was a WWII Army Veteran.

Mr. Wright said the position for the Veterans Service Officer has been posted. All applications are to be submitted to the Personnel Office.

Mr. Jenkins suggested that the committee consider reinstating the Veterans Concert at SPAC. Mr. Wright said he would look into having that put in the budget for 2015.

Mr. Wright said Mr. McClement is working in conjunction with the Office for the Aging to obtain State money to upgrade the Veterans Van.

Mr. Kinowski asked if a canopy could be put on the County Veterans Van. Mr. Wright said he would speak to Public Works about the possibility. Mr. Kinowski offered to donate whatever supplies would be needed.

On a motion made by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Barrett the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom