

Veterans Committee Minutes
February 1, 2016 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Barrett; Supervisors Kinowski, Lucia, Pemrick, Veitch, Collyer and Wright; Spencer Hellwig, Administrator; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Frank McClement, Veterans Director.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Mr. Veitch the minutes of the December 7, 2015 meeting were approved unanimously.

Chairman Barrett announced the appointment of Matthew Veitch as the Committee Vice Chair.

Mr. McClement gave a brief overview of the Veterans Service Agency 2015 Annual Report highlighting the following: The VA Expenditures in Saratoga County for the fiscal year 2014 exceeded \$75 million.

Mr. McClement said that 99.9% of the claims that pass through the Veterans Office continue to be electronically developed and archived. This allows for a more complete claim that leaves the Veterans more personally invested and results in a faster processing time at the federal level with more accurate and fair results.

Mr. McClement said in working with the County Clerk there were over 280 official requests for records conducted in 2015, and almost 2000 since the beginning of the program for those Veterans who did not have proper service documentation in their possession.

Mr. Hayner said currently approximately 3,200 FAVOR ID Cards have been issued.

Mr. McClement said throughout 2015, staff members worked hard to continue training in order to learn and grow to better serve clients. Staff completed all necessary training and background checks to obtain access to new VA electronic platforms; Veterans Benefits Management System and Stakeholders Enterprise Portal.

Mr. McClement said the fourth annual Revolutionary Run for Veterans took place in Schuylerville. This year's sponsorships totaled \$11,000. There were 447 registered runners which exceeded the previous year's run. Over 708 individuals volunteered, with the run raising over \$9,500 for the Saratoga County Veterans Trust and Agency Fund.

Mr. McClement said the new Veterans Van purchased through State Contract was delivered at the end of April 2015. A ribbon cutting ceremony took place to dedicate the new Van and publicize the program.

Mr. McClement said the Peer to Peer Program continues to grow. Highlights include the new Vets and Pets Partnership with the Animal Shelter, continuation of the Incarcerated Veterans Program at the Saratoga County Jail, and a Veterans Family Day picnic.

Mr. McClement said that the Veterans Service Agency was able to leverage Peer to Peer grant funding to upgrade computers in the Agency. Work continues with Data Processing to transition over to the centralized County services for data storage.

Mr. McClement said the Veterans Office is working with the NYS Division of Veterans Naval Affairs and Naval Support Unit, to resume access to the Transition Assistance Program at the Naval Facility in Saratoga Springs. Outreach events throughout the county were conducted which included senior centers, libraries, Yellow Ribbon Day, Vietnam 50th Anniversary Celebration, Veterans Day luncheons, and Interagency Awareness Day.

Mr. McClement said the Veterans Agency partnered with Clifton Park Toyota to provide five families with a Thanksgiving dinner. At Christmas, they partnered with Vet Help Supportive Services staff and Peer to Peer Program participants to adopt those same five families, taking \$2,000 from the Trust Fund and allocating it to these five families to make their holidays a little more special.

Mr. Barrett said that Lee Buck, a Vietnam Veteran from the Town of Halfmoon will be honored at the Deceased Veteran Ceremony in February, and Mr. Arnold Heggen, District Attorney Karen Heggen's Father, will be honored in March.

Mr. Barrett said that the Vietnam Moving Wall will be coming to the Town of Halfmoon in June courtesy of Senator Marchione.

Mr. Barrett said Mr. McClement is in the process of calling bands to see who is available and who isn't available for the Veterans Concert. He said he would keep the committee informed as things progress.

On a motion made by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Mr. Veitch the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom