

Veterans Committee Minutes  
February 12, 2018 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Mo Wright; Supervisors Preston Allen, Phil Barrett, Vince DeLucia, Dick Lucia, Dan Pemrick, Kevin Tollisen and Chairman of the Board Ed Kinowski; Chad Cooke, County Administrator; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Frank McClement, Veterans; Press.

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

Mr. Wright announced the appointment of Mr. DeLucia as Committee Vice Chair.

**On a motion made by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Barrett, the minutes of the December 11, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously.**

Mr. McClement distributed the 2017 Annual Report for the Veterans Agency and gave an overview of some of the details.

Veteran Population – Saratoga County is home of 18,140 veterans ranking 12<sup>th</sup> in New York State. All of the counties that are higher than Saratoga County in veteran population are either in and around New York City or Buffalo.

VA Expenditures – The Department of Veterans Affairs total expenditures for FY2016 came to \$81,079,000 in Saratoga County. Over \$40M of this is for compensation and pension, and \$30M is in medical care.

Peer to Peer program has continued to grow and currently has 198 active peers involved.

The Veterans Trust Fund – The departments major fundraiser, the Revolutionary Run for Veterans 5K was held and raised over \$11K. They updated the regulations for the Trust Fund, further defined who is eligible to receive funds and streamlined the guidelines and application process as much as possible. Grant amounts were increased, from \$500 to \$750 for individuals and from \$1500 to \$2000 for groups.

Office Relocation - The biggest project this past year was the relocation of the office to 2144 Doubleday Avenue. The agency moved in mid-August and began seeing clients almost immediately and hosting Peer to Peer events.

Staff Training – The staff continue to leverage any free training that is provided, they attend quarterly Veterans Service Officer conferences at the Albany VA Hospital. They utilize online VA Platforms for training. The NYS Division of Veterans affairs has cut their annual training for VSOs but Mr. McClement has identified additional training by the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers which will enable accreditation through several service organizations.

Honor Deceased Veteran Ceremonies – The VSA continued the successful and popular program. Mr. Wright thanked Mr. McClement for a job well done over the past year.

Mr. Wright said that they have decided to hold a Veterans Appreciation Concert again this year. They would like to hold the concert on the Monday afternoon of Labor Day, they have talked to SPAC and currently the date is open however they need to wait for LiveNation to release the date which should be done within the next 30 days. SPAC typically does not have a concert scheduled for Labor Day afternoon. Mr. Wright said that they have talked to the Army Field

Band and they are very interested in returning. Mr. Wright announced that he has appointed a working group to deal with the logistics of planning the event. Group members include Mr. Wright, Frank McClement, Therese Connolly and Supervisor Phil Barrett. He would also like to work with the County Clerk's Favor Program. Mr. Wright said that he would like additional participation in the group and will inform the committee of any meetings that will be scheduled.

Mr. Wright said that the Honor Deceased Veteran Ceremony in February will honor Arthur Devoe from the Town of Halfmoon, in March it will honor Samuel Johnson from the Town of Day. Mr. Johnson was the husband of past Supervisor Mary Ann Johnson and Mr. Wright encouraged Supervisors to attend to honor a past Supervisors husband. April will honor a veteran from the Town of Wilton.

Mr. Wright said that Mr. McClement previously emailed a list of upcoming deceased veterans ceremonies and the municipalities that were scheduled to be honored. Mr. Wright encouraged the supervisors to take a look at the list and provide nominations for their municipalities. If a municipality is not able to provide a nomination or needs to switch months, they can contact Mr. McClement to work on an alternative course of action.

Mr. Wright said that at next month's Human Resources meeting, they are scheduled to discuss waiving the civil service fees for Veterans. Mr. McClement said that the State recently passed legislation where they are waiving all civil service fees for honorably discharged veterans.

Mr. Wright said that at a recent NYSAC conference, there were several discussions regarding Veterans and having their military training collate over to civil service job specs. Mr. McClement said that there are some local colleges for example Empire State College and Excelsior College, that take military training into consideration.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Therese Connolly  
Deputy Clerk of the Board