

Veterans Committee Minutes
December 7, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Richardson; Committee Members Todd Kusnierz, Dick Lucia, Dan Pemrick, Mo Wright; Supervisor Ed Kinowski and Chairman of the Board Preston Allen; Chad Cooke, Matt Rose, County Administrator; Frank McClement, Veterans Service Agency.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Lucia, seconded by Mr. Pemrick, the minutes of the October 5, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. McClement distributed a copy of the Veterans Office Report for the months of October-November and gave a brief overview. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes. Mr. McClement said that they are conducting their business remotely, and only in absolutely necessary circumstances are they doing in-person meetings. They have new software that helps with remote applications, claims are assembled via phone, veterans can sign remotely via smart phone or tablet and this uploads to forms and applications in real time. The office is trying to take advantage of as much training and information sessions as possible. Mr. McClement said that one of the Virtual Towns Halls attended was as a caregiver County through the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. Mr. McClement said that they have also been taking advantage of NYS Division of Veterans Services offer of no cost webinars from the National Veterans Legal Services Project. The most recent training was on military sexual harassment trauma and claims for incidents related to this. Mr. McClement said that the Grace Chapel Church in Clifton Park recently donated the use of a tent for the Corinth American Legion for a special event. The Church also made a \$1,000 donation to the legion, which the Legion deferred to the Trust Fund. Van transportation is down due to a decrease in demand. The balance on hand in the Trust fund is currently \$103,694.43 which includes the large donation from Death Wish Coffee. This is the first time the fund has surpassed six figures since its inception. Mr. McClement said that he will be sending a certificate of appreciation to Death Wish Coffee. Thank you letters are sent to every single donation received.

Mr. McClement said that the Tuesday coffee night at Coffee Traders has resumed. They close at 5pm to the public and stay open just for the Veterans group with a maximum of 25 attendees. This event may transition to the Veterans office in the future. Mr. McClement said that normally Supervisors would be invited to their annual Christmas party however this year they will be limiting the number of attendees.

Mr. McClement said that they purchased a piece of equipment called the Meeting Owl which is a 360 degree camera that allows them to not only do virtual events such as benefits presentations but can also have people attend events around the meeting room and virtually simultaneously. Mr. McClement said that they have been trying their best to stay connected. They recently got permission from the property owner for a small gardening project next to the Veterans Building. Mr. McClement said that Amy Hughes has put together virtual nutrition classes via Zoom. A flyer with the details is attached to these minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Pemrick, seconded by Mr. Lucia, Committee approval to authorize Trust Fund disbursements in a total amount of \$8,000. Unanimous.

Mr. McClement said that the last time the Veterans Committee met it was discussed sharing the proceeds of the Death Wish donation. A handout detailing the four suggested donations was distributed. Two were requested and two are ideas from Mr. McClement. The handout is attached to these minutes. Mr. McClement gave an overview of the handout for those on the phone. Mr. Kinowski presented the National Cemetery Honor Guard Association request and Mr. Wright presented the request for the VFW Post 5836 Hadley. Mr. McClement said that the amounts requested are just suggested amounts by him. The guidelines provide for donations up to \$2,000 per organization with a committee vote. If the Committee feels that it's appropriate to go the \$2,000 level that is the decision of the Committee. Mr. Richardson said that the Death Wish Coffee donation totaled \$23,226 which is a windfall for this fund. Mr. Richardson suggested bringing all of four of the requests up to the \$2,000 level in donations. Mr. Richardson said these are all things that we should be doing all we can to help, especially in this time of need, especially for the Veterans. Mr. Wright thanked the Committee on behalf of the Hadley VFW.

Mr. Richardson said that the Honor Deceased Veterans Ceremony has been postponed due to Covid since early this year. Mr. Richardson said that he believes that it should also be postponed at least through March of next year. At that point, the 2021 Veterans Committee can take another look at it and see if it can begin again. Mr. McClement said that the next town on the list is the Town of Day. February 2020 was cancelled due to a snowstorm and March onward due to Covid-19. Mr. McClement said that the ceremony can pick right up where it left off. Mr. Richardson said that if anyone would like to honor a live or deceased Veteran at their own Town, Mr. McClement can provide information for the ceremony.

Mr. Richardson thanked everyone for their participation and support over the past year.

On a motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Pemrick, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board