

Veterans Committee Minutes  
August 30, 2021 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Richardson; Committee Members Preston Allen, Ed Kinowski, Jack Lawler, Dan Pemrick, Mo Wright, Benny Zlotnick; Steve Bulger, Ridge Harris, Matt Rose, Christine Rush, Audra Hedden, County Administrator; Michael Hartnett, County Attorney; Frank McClement, Veterans.

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

**On a motion by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Pemrick, the minutes of the July 8, 2021 meetings were approved was unanimously.**

*Communications to Committee*

Mr. McClement read a thank you card from The American Legion Old Saratoga Post #278 for the recent grant. Mr. McClement said the grant funds went towards flags and updating the monument and memorial at the Post. The grant is still available through the end of the year.

*Veterans Office Report*

Mr. McClement gave an overview of the report for July and August. The office has participated in a number of events including the Hadley Veterans Appreciation night, training opportunities, the Halfmoon Farmers Market, webinars and County Legion meetings. Forty rides were given for transportation to medical appointments and transportation is available two days a week with plans to add Wednesdays as an additional option if needed. Mr. McClement thanked Mrs. Rush and the Administrator's Office for help with the press release highlighting program events, including the weekly coffee night at Saratoga Coffee Traders which is a no agenda event that is very successful. He encouraged others to support Saratoga Coffee Traders as they are generous to the Veterans' Agency. Mr. McClement mentioned several peer enrichment programs being offered including guitar nights, paint & sips and Tai Chi.

Mr. Lawler inquired if they have received a spike calls in light of the current news from Afghanistan and if so, how can we let people know about the resources we have available to help. Mr. McClement said they are planning a Mental Health Summit for veterans and family members on September 14<sup>th</sup> to provide access to counseling through the VA, local organizations and the County Office of Mental Health, and to provide education about what programs and services they offer. Mr. Richardson asked if there could be a follow-up press release and social media to advertise this event and a discussion took place about advertising and media inquiries.

### *Veterans Trust Fund Report*

Mr. McClement said they had one disbursement in July of \$692.00 and they received a bequest of \$20,000 towards the purchase of a new van from the estate of a veteran they had provided transportation to for ten years. The balance of the account is \$117,401.70 of which \$20,000 is set aside for the purchase of a new van.

### **A motion was made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Zlotnick, to approve the Town of Malta's Honoring Veterans Grant Application. Unanimous.**

Mr. McClement said the Town is seeking \$2,500 to provide tuition reimbursement education grants of \$250 per person for veterans and family members. Mr. Allen asked if they had spent the money first and are asking for reimbursement. A discussion took place regarding how the money would be accounted for if it hasn't already been spent by the Town of Malta. Mr. Lawler made the motion with the caveat that the details will be worked out between Mr. Richardson and Mr. O'Connor. Mr. Richardson agreed.

### *Upcoming Honor Deceased Veterans Ceremonies*

Mr. Richardson said the first one (since the pandemic) will honor Bob Mitchell. Mr. McClement said they will start where we left off in the schedule in December, but before they pick back up in the schedule, in November they will honor Bob Mitchell, one of the founders of the program and a former Veterans' Director.

### *Other Business*

Mr. Richardson asked Mr. McClement to explain the budget wish list item they will be bringing before the budget committee. Mr. McClement said they are currently in a three year lease that has been working out but not knowing where you're going to reside as a County Agency every three years comes with problems. The Stewarts building across the street from the agency just went on the market for \$625,000. It would provide around 300 more square feet of office space. Cost estimates to build out the interior were not obtained due to the cost of those estimates. Mr. McClement said there may be opportunity to offset some of the cost with Peer Program grants. Mr. Lawler said that if any service we provide to a specific group of people deserves its own spot, this is high up on the list. A discussion took place regarding the possibility of elected delegates with access to grant funds wanting to be involved and the possibility of using ARPA funds. Mr. Richardson suggested Mr. McClement make an appointment with Stewarts to bring County Public Works employees into the space to get an idea of what the cost of building out the interior would be. The committee agreed.

**On a motion by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Zlotnick, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Bridget Rider  
Deputy Clerk of the Board