

VETERANS Transcript 11-1-2021

SPEAKERS

Ed Kinowski, Mo Wright, Dan Pemrick, Michael Hartnett, Preston Allen, Benny Zlotnick, Frank McClement, Several Supervisors, Tom Richardson, Bridget Rider

Tom Richardson

Okay, so good afternoon, everybody and welcome to the Veterans Committee. Attendance has been taken by Bridget. We're all set there?

Bridget Rider

Yes, it has.

Tom Richardson

Okay. So we're going to communications to the committee. Mr. Bulger, we have anything? Frank, you have any communications?

Frank McClement

We have none.

Tom Richardson

Okay. That's good. Oh, yeah, we should do the minutes. Right. That's a great point. We need approval of the minutes from the August 30th meeting.

Mo Wright

So moved.

Dan Pemrick

I'll second.

Ed Kinowski

I'll make that motion.

Tom Richardson

Mo's first.

Ed Kinowski

Ed Kinowski.

Tom Richardson

Ed, Dan beat you.

Ed Kinowski

That's good.

Tom Richardson

So any, any additions or deletions? If not all in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tom Richardson

Any opposed? We're good to move along. Okay. So Veterans Report, we'll give that to Frank.

Frank McClement

Good afternoon Supervisors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A copy of the Veterans Service Agency report for the month of September and October 2021, has just been distributed to the committee. For brevity's sake, I won't go through every line but a couple of highlights just wanted to note 72 new claims assembled and submitted, we conducted 48 scheduled appointments, we had 40 walk-ins so we're starting to see a pickup on walking traffic there. And just for clarification for the committee, for the County Administrator, you know, when we submit a claim that's one action and oftentimes that step one in what could become many years of work for that individual veteran. So a claim could be something very mild and mundane or claim could be something very complex, and long term. But we continue to stay dedicated to training and we've been taking advantage of a lot of training, as you can see, on the report, to continue to serve our veterans. So unlike some other agencies where eligibility for a particular service, or benefit is controlled at the local level, or adjudicated at the local level, we're essentially an advocate and a representative for the veteran and we're putting together a quality packet and submitting it to the Department of Veterans Affairs. So that's what that that's about. Continue to stay busy. We're back supporting the Transition Assistance Program of the Navy base, we're actually kind of in a unique position and have a great partnership where we're going in before or after the VA and giving benefits brief from a Veteran Service Officer perspective to those that are separating from active duty service, mostly from the Navy, they do get some Army National Guard and other services up there for the transition assistance program that is a Federal DOD program, but because of the relationship we maintain with the naval facility up there, we're able to participate. And that has been very beneficial to those individuals who are separating. If they're going to stay local, we connect with them, we take care of them. If not, we make sure that they're connected with somebody wherever there it is that they're going. So we're pretty proud of that partnership. We took part in the New York State Division of Veterans Services, annual training, this year it was virtual. In the past we've either had to travel or go to an in person training in Saratoga Springs or Albany. So it was virtual this year, so we were able to participate in that. Malta veterans had a great appreciation luncheon down in Malta, we were able to speak at that and do some outreach. So it's always good to get those outreach opportunities. And the thing with COVID was those weren't happening so we're happy to see some of that stuff go on, get the word out. And we always usually pick up a couple of clients and talk to a couple veterans who didn't know about us and what they were doing. On the 22nd I was actually fortunate and honored to participate as a panelist for NAMI's annual conference which they held virtually, and they had a

symposium on veterans' mental health and access to mental health services and care. And I was able to participate as a County Veteran's Service Officer and a veteran along with spouse of a veteran and caregiver of a veteran and VA mental health providers. And I would like the committee to know that it was kind of short notice but our former program coordinator, Amy Hughes that retired running our Joe Dwyer Peer Connection Program here in Sarasota County, she was honored with an award by NAMI for her work with that program. So our program continues to get recognized throughout the state, and we're very proud of the work that's happened. And Amy, while she has retired and we will miss her, our work will continue. And a big part of that program success is the veterans themselves. So thank you to the board for supporting that. But I just want to let the committee know that she won that award and, and that our program has been recognized in that way. As you can see, our transportation, were picking up a little bit. Demand is starting to pick up we're starting to see more ridership as the VA, they still don't have a lot of groups going on in their adult day program still isn't happening, which was historically 50% of our ridership. But we are seeing a demand

Frank McClement

for transportation. So we've got two new drivers on as we lost a couple through pandemic due to retirements for whatever reason, you know how often and our personal reasons for those drivers. But we've got two new drivers on board so we have a full staff and we're ready to add additional days as the demand sees fit. So I expect in November will be running, right now we're doing two, we'll be running three in November and maybe by the end of the year for but that all depends on need. Our peer to peer program summary, just to let everybody know our coffee nights still is happening at Saratoga Coffee Traders from 5 to 6:30. There's no agenda, any veterans can come and coffee's on us the sandwiches on us. I would invite any of the Supervisors, if anybody at any time wants to drop in and say hello to our group and say hello to our veterans, feel free to do so it's again Saratoga coffee traders on Broadway in Saratoga Springs. They close the coffee shop down to us. And they do a great job. And it's one of our better attended events, we usually average over 20 veterans a week there. So that's been very successful. Our women's walking group is continuing. I know that our new program coordinator, Christina, is looking into an alternative location for the wintertime to try to keep that going. But we've had some success with that. We hosted a mental health summit on the 17th of September. I know we got a lot of press, I want to thank the County Administrator's office and Christine, in particular, for helping us publicize that and also, we had some nice press there and what we were able to do in the wake of the changes in the things happening Afghanistan was bring together a symposium of folks who work in mental health with the VA, and suicide prevention and offer insight on access to care and access to resources for that. So we hosted that right at our office and that was very successful so thanks to everybody involved with that. A couple other events that you can see. And we'll talk about our honor deceased program here coming soon. So I'll leave that to the Chairman.

Tom Richardson

Any questions for Frank? Okay, seeing none, we'll move on to the Veterans Trust Fund report.

Frank McClement

Okay, very briefly, a copy of the most recent entries, I usually try to give the committee each month at least back the last calendar year, so you can see we had a couple of emergency disbursements, but our fund remains healthy. We have a balance on hand of \$116,151.70. We had an emergency

disbursement, we worked with adult family services for a veteran who was in an unsafe situation his home needed an emergency clean out. We work with, I worked with the Chairman, to make sure that we've got that taken care of. We do have a couple of applications that will be going out this month, emergency applications. So we're still there., we're ready to support and we are actively leveraging that as appropriate. So.

Tom Richardson

Okay, thanks, Frank. Any questions in regards to the trust fund? Okay, if not, we're going to take a look at the honor, Honoring Veterans Grant Program Applications. They're all, everybody has those in front of you, the Town of Malta, the Town of Providence and the City of Mechanicsville. So I don't know if anybody has any questions regards to those. Do we need a resolution for all three at once? Or can, we can do?

Michael Hartnett

All three at once.

Tom Richardson

All three at once. Okay, so unless anybody has any questions in regards to those applications, I know the one from Mechanicville. They've been working in the City with the Veterans Monument and a walkway where they're putting brooks of, bricks, excuse me, of deceased Veterans in the walkway and the money that we were able to give them is helping them put the finishing touches on that so it should be done hopefully soon. So they were very thankful for that the Legion and Mechanicville. So if we could have, someone want to

Mo Wright

I'll move all of them.

Tom Richardson

Mo.

Benny Zlotnick

I'll second them.

Tom Richardson

Benny Second. All in favor, aye.

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tom Richardson

Any opposed? If not, passes. Let's move on. So the upcoming Honor Deceased Veterans Ceremony is going to be the 16th. We're honoring Bob Mitchell, the County's actually honoring Bob Mitchell, together all of us. As you know, Bob was here with us for a few years and was a great guy and it's just a terrific thing that we're going to be able to honor him this this coming month. The other thing I want to mention

is because of the different things that have been happening recently, we thought we would skip December and move into January to move on with the honor Honoring the Deceased Veterans. So Frank will, will have a listing of which Towns are going to be ready to go right?

Frank McClement

Yes, Supervisor. We initially had, when we put the schedule out for any confusion, we had a couple of ceremonies right before the pandemic that were canceled due to a snowstorm. And it was, in my mind thinking back and of course, it was a year and a half, we thought that we had canceled one particular ceremony when in fact, we held it for the Town of Saratoga, Charles Drew. So we held that ceremony, we had them slated for December. And as everyone is aware there is possibly going to be some renovations taking place in this room. That's all dependent upon supply chain issues that are going on, so we thought given that the ceremony is going to end up being around the same week as Christmas, we might just be (inaudible) we're going to come back in November, we're going to honor Bob Mitchell and then we'll take a month off and come back in January with a full reboot in our regular rotation each month thereafter.

Tom Richardson

We'll have the full schedule ready for everybody so everybody knows which month of next year their community will be up. Okay. Any questions? Okay, on other business I'd like to just the Town of Hadley, Mo brought in his voucher for the \$2,500. And I think, Bridget, did you give everybody copies? Everybody has copies in front of them. So what I'd like to do is, if we can have a motion to pass, pass this resolution so that we can make sure Hadley gets their \$2,500.

Dan Pemrick

I'll move that.

Tom Richardson

Thanks, Dan. Do we have second?

Preston Allen

I'll second.

Tom Richardson

Mr. Allen. Thank you. Anybody have any questions? If not all in favor?

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tom Richardson

Any opposed? Okay, One other thing other business is Frank and I've been talking, because of expenses things are getting more expensive day in and day out as we move forward through the years. The emergency monies that we spend some time for veterans who are having immediate problems that need funds immediately, the limit is \$750 I believe. Frank and I are, we've been discussing this and we'd like to at the next meeting in December, bring some new parameters based on what we've been

seeing in recent months, as far as the amount of money that the trust fund could spend out through an emergency fund. So if anybody has any ideas regarding so that we're certainly open to any, any thoughts or anything, feel free to give me a call or give Frank a call and we'll discuss that in December. So,

Ed Kinowski

Mr. Chairman?

Tom Richardson

Yes, Ed?

Ed Kinowski

Yeah, thank you for recognizing, I just wanted to let you know, next month is last month, we could probably submit for the reimbursement of the money and one of our posts that we gave money to buy our resolutions locally, had put the money aside to complete their project in November. And so I had the package ready to go to you for reimbursement they'll be providing to Frank after their event this coming week. So I didn't I couldn't submit it prior to that. So we'll be putting it in for December.

Tom Richardson

Okay, thank you. Thanks Ed, I appreciate that.

Frank McClement

I just wanted to bring up to the committee that for our end of the year of accounting, I believe, I don't have the date in front of me, but we can see those up until January. So if any, any of the Town's haven't submitted, they could submit reimbursement pretty much through to the end of the year. We'd like to see them hopefully before the end of the year, but we do have a date in January where we're closing our books.

Tom Richardson

Yes, Dan.

Dan Pemrick

Are we under other business?

Tom Richardson

Yes, we certainly are. Go ahead.

Dan Pemrick

I just like to announce that last August the Town of Greenfield held a in conjunction with Brookhaven golf course a veterans tournament, which we raised \$6,000 for veterans. And we're here today with Mr. Veitch, who will be replacing me in January. We'll have a \$3,000 check to give to Frank and the Veterans Agency on behalf of the Town of Greenfield and Brookhaven golf course. And the other half will go to Darlene de Lancey. Okay, for the VA Administration, who I hope will be attending along with

you at our Veterans Luncheon on November 11th coming up. And don't move from those nice seats, we'll get a photo op when we're done.

Tom Richardson

Dan, thanks so much. We really appreciate that. That's, as everybody knows, every little bit helps for our veterans, so thanks so much.

Dan Pemrick

You're welcome.

Tom Richardson

Any other business to come before us today? See none. We need a motion to adjourn.

Mo Wright

I'll make that motion.

Tom Richardson

Mo.

Benny Zlotnick

Second.

Tom Richardson

Ben, thank you. All in favor, aye.

Several Supervisors

Aye.

Tom Richardson

Jack is trying to be second. Okay. Thanks. We appreciate it. Thanks. Have a great week.