

**Veterans Affairs Committee**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**March 15, 2015**

PRESENT: R. Farrington, P. DeRing, J. Sterry, W. Willinsky, R. Cote, T. Dickerson

ABSENT: K. Burke, F. Hutchings, W. Petras

OTHERS PRESENT: S. Bransfield – First Select Woman

**1. CHAIRMAN CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chairman R. Farrington called the REGULAR meeting to order at 6:30 PM at the American Legion Hall, located at 12 Freestone Avenue, Portland, Connecticut.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF OUR COUNTRY**

**3. ACCEPT AGENDA**

There was a motion by J. Sterry, seconded by R. Cote, to accept the agenda as presented. Vote unanimous, motion carried.

**4. ACCEPT MEETING MINUTES**

There was a motion by J. Sterry, seconded by R. Cote, to approve the meeting minutes of January 26, 2015 as presented. Vote unanimous, motion carried.

There was no meeting on February 23, 2015 but only an informational session because there was not a quorum. There were four members in attendance but due to the re-appointment of the VAC by the Board of Selectman (BOS) on February 4, 2015. The BOS re-appointed the VAC with 9 voting members (removing R. Walton who moved out of town and could not be contacted) and no alternates. This resulted in the quorum now being 5 members vice 4 as the VAC had previously been appointed as 7 members and 3 alternates.

**5. VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER'S REPORT (J. Sterry)**

There is one case that we continue to work on.

**6. VETERANS BENEFITS & INFORMATION OFFICER'S REPORT (P. DeRing)**

He received an e-mail today concerning the Governor's proposed State budget that will remove the \$469,533 line of funding for military funeral honors. He was wondering if there was anything the VAC could do. He said it was a big deal for families of the deceased.

S. Bransfield added that this is what the VAC is charged with doing. Responding to issues that affect the veterans of Portland. She fully supported the VAC sending a letter to the Governor, our State Senator, and State Representative. She also said she would be willing to bring it up before the Board of Selectman for possible additional action.

T. Dickerson would draft a letter from the VAC.

R. Farrington said he would talk to the Middletown Press and River East newspapers about this.

**7. COMMISSION ADVISOR'S REPORT**

None.

**8. OLD BUSINESS**

T. Dickerson updated everyone that the Town of Portland web page was updated to include the names of the veterans on the Veterans Memorial. Special thanks to Dave Kuzminski and Kevin Armstrong.

R. Farrington will put a newspaper article in seeking new names to be added to the Veteran's Memorial.

W. Willinsky passed that Pastor James R. Reemts had left his position and that a new interim Pastor has taken over. W. Willinsky will start asking around for volunteers to do the invocation and benediction for the Memorial Day Parade. We also need to start thinking about a keynote speak.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

W. Willinsky passed that the garden clubs will be meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the Waverly Center. He was planning to attend to thank them for the work they do in keeping the gardens looking beautiful.

The wreath at the Veteran's Memorial held up well but will be coming down soon.

T. Dering just wanted to remind people that just because the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been slowing down, there are still troops being deployed overseas from Connecticut. Three units from Connecticut have recently deployed or will soon be deploying overseas so please keep them in your thoughts.

R. Farrington recommended that we start looking for a new VAC Chairman as he would like to step down from that position but will remain on the VAC. He has been the VAC Chairman since it was created September 14th 2005.

S. Bransfield stated that the town was grateful for R. Farrington's continuing years of service.

**10. GENERAL DISCUSSION / PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**11. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Timothy E. Dickerson

Recording Secretary