

Veterans Affairs Committee
REGULAR MEETING
December 19, 2015

PRESENT: W. Willinsky, R. Farrington, T. Dickerson, P. DeRing, J. Sterry(arrived late)

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

OTHERS PRESENT: S. Bransfield (First Selectwoman)
W. Hertig (American Legion member)
Film crew (Shooting short clips for a commercial the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities is working on for Portland)

1. CHAIRMAN CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman W. Willinsky called the REGULAR meeting to order at 6:37 PM at the American Legion Hall, located at 12 Freestone Avenue, Portland, Connecticut. A quorum of members was not present at the beginning (5 are required) so the meeting was started as an informational session until the fifth member arrived.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF OUR COUNTRY

General Discussion

Discussed the Veterans Day Dinner. Everyone said it was very nice.

A thank you letter was sent to Seby Milardo(owner of the Melilli Café and Grill (signed by S. Bransfield and Wm. Willinsky) He was very appreciative and plans to do it again next year.

This was the 6th year we have done a Veterans Day Dinner. (Frank Cavalieri did it the first 2 years, his son did it the third year and this was Seby's third year.)

Susan passed that as this is the 175th Anniversary of the Town of Portland, there are plans to do a lot of activities. We all asked if we could have a Veteran representative on the committee and she thought that was a great idea. Wm Willinsky volunteered to be the veterans' representative.

Discussed the Veteran Assembly held November 20th at the Portland Middle School. While similar to the High School assembly the prior week, this was part of the PMS Citizenship Assembly and included a video made by young people for the students. There were two teachers and seven other veterans in attendance.

There was no Veterans assembly at Valley View this year. Ms. Colleen Brede may have switched schools.

The American Legion Veteran's Day breakfast was very good. They even ran out of food before the scheduled end time.

VAC member J. Sterry arrived giving us a quorum.

3. ACCEPT AGENDA

N/A

4. ACCEPT MEETING MINUTES

R. Farrington made a motion, seconded by J. Sterry to accept the minutes from the September 21, 2015 meeting. All were in favor. (There was no meeting in October due to the potluck dinner in honor of the American Legion Boys State and Girls State representatives from Portland and there was no quorum in November. The November meeting was an informational session only.)

5. Secretary's Report

Wreathes purchased through Wreathes Across America by Portland were delivered. Most went to the State Veterans Cemetery and S. Petras delivered some to Portland's schools, cemeteries, and Offices.

6. VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER'S REPORT (J. Sterry)

No ongoing cases.

R. Farrington said that he had received a call from a veteran with mesothelioma saying the VA was giving him a hard time. J. Sterry will follow up with the veteran.

W. Hartig said he had experienced a similar case a few years ago in Middletown. The VA and American Legion both worked to get the veteran assistance.

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

P. DeRing passed that October was a very big month for the Army National Guard in terms of deaths by suicides, accidents, and illnesses. The Army National Guard held a Health of the Workforce Campaign. During this campaign, every service member had to be spoken to by a supervisor for a wellness check to see if there were any ongoing issues.

P. Dering said that an updated Veterans' Resource sheet had been completed. He would provide it to T. Dickerson for uploading to the Portland website.

8. COMMISSION ADVISOR'S REPORT (R. Farrington)

Nothing more.

9. OLD BUSINESS

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Someone mentioned that they did not think that all of our minutes had made it to the Portland website. T. Dickerson will follow up on this.

W. Willinsky proposed the VAC meeting dates for the next year. Meetings times are 6:30 PM as follows: No meeting in January, February 22nd, March 21st, April 18th, May 16th, Jun 20th, No meeting in July or August, September 19th, October 17th, November 21st and December 19th.

T. Dickerson made a motion, seconded by J. Sterry to accept the 2016 meeting dates as proposed. All were in favor.

It is requested to have the following VAC positions updated.

T. Dickerson – Secretary

K. Burke – Member

The Wadsworth Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution presented a wreath to Portland for Veteran's day. We will ask M. Ceppaglia to draft a thank you letter to Mrs. Holsteadt.

11. GENERAL DISCUSSION / PUBLIC COMMENT

Held at the beginning.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

R. Farrington made a motion, seconded by P. DeRing to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM. There is no Regular meeting scheduled for January 2016 so the next Regular meeting will be February 22, 2016 at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

//S//

Timothy E. Dickerson

Recording Secretary