

West Suburban Veterans District – July 29, 2020

Location: Remote Zoom Meeting

Present: Kate Fitzpatrick, Leon Gaumond, and Meghan Jop

Also present: Nancy Blanchard, Chris Coleman, Amy Frigulietti, Sarada Kalpee and Sally Rose

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 11:10 am.

Business:

1. Citizen Speak

None

2. Minutes

The Board voted (3-0-0) to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2020 meeting.

3. Outreach Events

Nancy presented the Outreach that has occurred since the March meeting. In CH 115 there has been one transfer and one client was dropped in Needham, and one client was added in Weston. Currently, the District has 8 CH 115 clients. Regarding the 4 Claims that have been processed since March 2nd, 2 were disability claims, 1 was aid and attendance and 1 was an appeal claim. A Veteran had a 10% hearing disability and was appealing to get a higher disability rating.

Julie Secord, the COA Director in Wayland, had notified Nancy and Sarada to let them know that Wayland had received a Covid 19 grant to provide free transportation for medical appointments and errands to Wayland residents. Nancy will contact Julie with the contact information of any Wayland Veterans that might be interested in this service.

Sarada mentioned that a Weston CH115 Veteran has been approved for 2 months of benefits, with a monthly amount over \$2,000. Sally will invoice Weston if more funds are needed to cover this expense.

Sarada and Nancy gathered perishable food from the Food for Vets program that was held at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro. They delivered food kits to CH 115 clients in 3 towns. No Memorial Day Ceremonies were held due to the Coronavirus in Wellesley. However, Tom Doherty and his crew placed flags at Woodlawn Cemetery in Wellesley. The Needham VFW replaced flags for their Memorial Day and conducted a small ceremony. The Flag Day Ceremony in Wellesley was held on July 14th. The Wayland Boy Scouts usually burn the flags on Flag Day, but this year that didn't happen. Sarada took Wayland's flags to burn with Wellesley's. Weston's DPW does something with the flags. Leon was going to look into what happens with Weston's flags.

Nancy and Sarada have sent out Welcome letters to 900 Veterans, introducing Nancy and explaining what services the District can provide, including survivor spouse and pension

benefits. They will be mailing out more in the next few weeks. Nancy has met with Kevin Richards from Tenacre Elementary School. Once school life returns to normal Tenacre is interested in continuing the program of having the students write letters to Veterans.

Nancy mentioned that Purple Heart Day is Friday, August 7th and the Purple Heart Flag should be flown. She also mentioned that the State is encouraging municipalities to illuminate their buildings in purple to honor Purple Heart Veterans. If anyone is interested in finding out more about this Nancy can provide contact information.

4. Director's Update

The Board voted 3-0 to divide the remaining FY20 funds, \$82,947.28, between the four towns based on the population ratio. Sally will inform each town of how much money will be added to their CH 115 account.

Chris Coleman, Westwood's Town Administrator, participated in the meeting as Westwood is interested in joining the District. Chris was going to let the District know how many CH 115 clients Westwood has. If Westwood joins the District, then the VSO would be spending one day per week in each community. The Board voted 3-0 to approve Westwood joining the District subject to State approval. This would begin on January 1, 2021. Chris was going to have the Westwood Select Board vote on joining the District. Meghan was going to ask Tom Harrington to formalize a letter to send to Cheryl Poppe, the acting MA Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Westwood's population is a little under 15,000.

This was Sarada's last meeting for a while as she will be deployed. During Sarada's absence Nancy will be working full time for the District.

5. Old/New Business

Meghan suggested the Board schedule the next meeting in the Fall.

The Zoom meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.