

West Suburban Veterans District – December 3, 2020

Location: Remote Zoom Meeting

Present: Kate Fitzpatrick, Leon Gaumond, and Meghan Jop

Also present: Nancy Blanchard, John Bugbee, Chris Coleman, Kristen Frady, Amy Frigulietti, Katie King, Sarada Kalpee, Timothy McDonald, Sally Rose, Kristen Scoble, Richard Turner, and Beth Sullivan Woods

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 1:35 pm.

Business:

1. Citizen Speak

None

2. Minutes

The Board voted (3-0-0) to approve the minutes of the July 29, 2020 meeting.

3. Outreach Events

Nancy shared that she has received tremendous feedback regarding the Veteran ceremonies that occurred in November in honor of Veteran's Day. Nancy invited the Graves/Ceremonial Officers from each town to join the Zoom meeting. Richard Turner from Wayland attended the meeting. Joe Oliveri, Wellesley, Bill Topham, Needham, and Rick Wohler, Weston, were unable to make the meeting. Kristen Scoble, from Wayland, did a luncheon for Veterans. Rich Turner, from Wayland, said they had a very good ceremony that included the rifle team from the American Legion Post, representatives from the Board of Selectman and the reading of the names on the Veteran Memorial. Vietnam Air Force Veteran, Michael Patterson, was the main speaker. He flew 314 combat missions. The Wayland Girl Scouts had placed flags on the graves. Rich had pulled a permit to hold the outdoor ceremony.

Nancy spoke about Wayland's Wreaths Across America, WAA, ceremony being held on December 19, 2020 where the Johnson Family will be donating \$10,000 to WAA and dressing 300 wreaths where the patriarch of family was buried. David Johnson is the contact for this program.

Kristen Frady, the Weston COA Program & Volunteer Coordinator, with the assistance of WSVD, hosted a Veteran' Day Grab-n-Go Luncheon.

Beth Sullivan Woods, from the Wellesley Select Board, collaborated with the Celebrations Committee, to contact local Veterans in hosting the Salute to Veterans Month event. For the month of November, the Celebrations Committee had volunteers decorate 12 storefronts or empty storefronts, throughout downtown. Also, the committee filmed displays and war artifacts in the windows and had a firefighters marching band perform a concert of patriotic music on Saturday, November 14th. The Celebrations Committee sponsored the outdoor drive-in showing of the movie *Midway*. The parking lot was full, and an American Flag was hung from the

lamppost. Letters written by Tenacre Country Day students were distributed at the Wellesley ceremony as well as mailed to selected veterans within the community.

Nancy said that Bill Topham, from Needham, hosted the Veteran's Day Ceremony at Memorial Park and participated in the New England Exchange sock drive.

4. Director's Update

Nancy said that the CH 115 recertification letters were sent out with both the November and December benefit checks. There are currently 6 CH 115 recipients. One veteran successfully appealed his hearing disability ranking and raised it from 10% to 50%. Nancy attended the Women's Veterans Network 12th Annual Conference held virtually this year. She said there were many resources and networking opportunities. Because of Covid-19, the annual October VSO Conference Training in Leominster was cancelled. Instead, Nancy takes part in mini VSO Zoom Training sessions that she has found helpful.

The Board discussed the proposed FY22 Budget, which included only the current 4 towns. Westwood is interested in joining the District. Chris will provide Sally with the population of Westwood according to the 2010 census. Sally will then redistribute the FY22 Draft Budget projection showing what each town's contribution to the operating budget would be with Westwood. Chris was going to check on the status of the letter to be sent to Cheryl Poppe, the Commonwealth's Secretary for the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS), regarding Westwood joining the District.

Meghan suggested that the Outreach budget line be level-funded to account for any additional expenses incurred with notifying Westwood residents of the change. Regarding mileage reimbursement, Sarada said that she submitted mileage for travel to attend funerals or other events outside of the four towns. She didn't include travel between the four towns.

(Once the letter regarding Westwood joining the District is submitted to Cheryl Poppe time will pass before we will get a response. If approved the district will be given a year probationary approval, which, if successful, will be followed by a 3-year approval.)

5. Old/New Business

John Bugbee, Wayland's Assistant Town Manager, joined the meeting. Meghan suggested the Board schedule the next meeting for February 4th at 1:30 p.m.

The Zoom meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.