

Veterans Affair Committee
REGULAR MEETING
April 17, 2023

PRESENT: W. Willinsky, T. Dickerson, W. Petras, R. Spooner (A) (A) = Alternate

ABSENT: R. Cote, J. Sterry, M. Foreman (A) (Note: R. Farrington has passed away and C. Rouleau resigned.)

OTHERS PRESENT: Corey Anne Armstrong, Michael Tierney (Portland Town Clerk), Frasier Brimley (American Legion District 7 Commander).

1. CHAIRMAN CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman W. Willinsky called the REGULAR meeting to order at 1838 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

Agenda accepted as written.

4. ACCEPT MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by W. Willinsky, seconded by R. Spooner to accept the minutes of the March 20, 2023 meeting as written. **All were in favor. Motion passed.**

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT (T. Dickerson)

Correction. M. Tierney passed that there are officially only two vacancies on the VAC. He has not received a resignation from M. Foreman yet. T. Dickerson passed that M. Foreman may be moving back to Connecticut. We will try to contact him to see what his status is.

An article was published in the River East Newspaper advertising for the vacant VAC positions.

T. Dickerson passed that C. Armstrong has moved back to Portland and is interested in rejoining the VAC.

We then had a long discussion on the process of getting members appointed to the VAC. It is the Board of Selectmen's responsibility to fill vacant positions. The VAC has no official role in this process. The VAC volunteered to submit the article in the River East newspaper to get the word out that we need more veterans for the VAC and the names of any interested veterans would then be passed to the First Selectman.

As best we understand it, the normal process is a name of a prospective VAC member is brought to the attention of the First Selectman. The First Selectman notifies the Town Clerk who then notifies the Chairman of the respective Portland Democratic or Republican Town Committee. While the chairman of these committees can then review the name(s) and provide a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, it is ultimately the Board of Selectmen that is responsible for filling the vacant position(s).

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

Not Present.

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

S. Petras provided some information on the PACT Act. It makes a lot more veterans eligible for VA coverage. Follow this link for more information: <https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/>

8. COMMITTEE ADVISOR'S REPORT (Vacant)

Nothing New. No one knew if this position was designated in the Board of Selectman's establishment of the VAC or not so we will have to investigate if we need BoS approval to do away with this position.

9. OLD BUSINESS

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

S. Petras has ½ box of flags donated to him by the Patriot Guard.

W. Willinsky passed that the cost of American flags has gone up again this year. (They are \$2.25 each.) He is ordering flags to be placed on veterans' graves in Portland.

He also retired a bunch of old flags at the transfer station last week.

11. GENERAL DISCUSSION / PUBLIC COMMENT

Reminder that the Memorial Day Parade is May 28th.

F. Brimley suggested we also investigate the cost of flags through Emblem.Legion.org.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

A motion was made by S. Petras, seconded by T. Dickerson to adjourn the meeting. **All were in favor, motion passed.** Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

The next Regular meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2023 at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Timothy E. Dickerson

Recording Secretary