MEETING MINUTES / 21 APRIL 2020

**MEETING WAS CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS**

ATTENDANCE:
Present: Showell, Stewart, Baldwin, Farley, Lardizzone, Lopez, Magner, McMullen, Sarg, Seppala **83.3%**

Excused: Bradley, Newman

Unexcused:

Guests: Courtney Stewart (Deputy Secretary of State), Vince Kane (Wilmington VAMC), Ginny Yelland (Wilmington VAMC), Tina Foskey (Delaware Veterans Home), Pat Cerchio (First State Women Warriors)

CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS:
Moment of silence for:
Service Members abroad
Martin Luther King Jr
Wished Chairwoman Showell good health as she’s “under the weather”

MEETING MINUTES:
October minutes were motioned by McMullen approved by Magner

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:
Wilmington VAMC – Vince Kane, Director
Due to COVID-19, no visitors are authorized in the facilities
Patient care has shifted to telehealth
Testing is being done outside the emergency room
- Results are read in 45 minutes
- 38 veteran cases are being treated
- One veteran, who was on a ventilator, passed away
Continuing to monitor individuals who are positive
Added beds to meet the potential outcomes from the pandemic
- The beds remain empty
Precautionary actions have minimized infections
Veterans with infections are being managed at home
Staff with infections are also being monitored
- Goal is to ensure they are healthy and then safe to return to work
Discussing with the governor and state on what a start-up would look like
- Not at a point where a start-up will begin soon
- Virus spread is still occurring and have not met criteria to consider routine operations
- Decrease in new cases must be met
Once things start back up, it will be different then how it used to be
- Virtual platforms, scheduling differently, waiting areas, masking veterans, facility entry
Has changed the way to deliver healthcare and will review lessons learned
(Sarg) How is your supply of personal protective equipment?
Worked closely with hospital systems and VA to maintain supply
- Prepared to receive additional supplies
- Appreciate donations

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Tina Foskey, Director:
76 Residents
Closed to admissions and visitors since early March
Started and continue to screen employees
- Looking for sore throat, cough, fever
No residents with COVID-19
Following state, federal, and CMS regulations
Renovations have been put on hold
Good with personal protective equipment
Staff is doing an excellent job taking care of the residents and maintaining hygiene

Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:
Two beds available at male facility / six beds at female facility
Everyone is wearing masks and adhering to hygiene standards
Screening everyone for symptoms
Engaging residents with mental health webinars
Four staff are working from home and eight are at the facility
- This allows for social distancing
Masks are needed

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
Pat Cerchio, First State Women Warriors
The Women’s Tea was rescheduled to 11 July

Anna Lopez, Commissioner
Still seeking stand down donations, will forward information on where to send

COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Magner:
Interments – 70 (-10)

Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:
Interments – 30 (+8)

Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:
Dover AFB has limited access to retirees
- Clinic is not providing medical care
- Pharmacy prescriptions are filled for pick up on Wednesday and Saturday
- Masks are required in the commissary and they are performing a 100% identification check
Food Bank distributions are 22 (Dover Downs), and 24 (Sussex Central High School) April
Veterans home dental suite project is awaiting plan approval

Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:
(Sarg) Legislation will depend on post-COVID 19 actions and state budget
General Assembly sent a letter to the U.S. Delegation requesting the use of $1.25B in federal aid to the state’s revenue fund for state services
- The aid package currently has too many usage restrictions
Our recommendations will be based on funding (McMullen). The commission’s 8 April veterans committee presentation was cancelled and asked the staff to forward copies of the recommendations to the committee members.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS:**

DVTF Previous Month: Applications 13; Granted 9 (69.2%); Awarded $9,408.46; Balance - $15,670.00

Secretary of State is discussing with the Governor the possible cancellation of our Memorial Day services.

**ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:**

Commissioner McMullen (Air Force Sergeants Association - AFSA)
Chapter meetings have been cancelled until further notice
- Members have voluntarily stocked the commissary shelves
21 – 23 April: The Division 1 Professional Airman Conference, Dayton, OH was cancelled
- A teleconference will be held with chapter leadership
In February spoke to Representative Yearick and Representative Bonini about our legislative recommendations

Vacant (American Legion - AL)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AmVets)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)
Have not held meetings and meetings are cancelled until September
Departmental conference has been cancelled until next year
Submitted claims for two widows
National Convention, Dallas, TX, is still scheduled for July

Vacant (Korean War Veterans)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)
Working on holding a departmental meeting via Zoom
Toys for Tots is attempting to establish a toy distribution during the crisis
- Information via the Toys for Tots Foundation website

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)
Was scheduled to storm the hill (Capitol Hill) the third week in March but it was cancelled
- Emailing delegates on MOAA recommendations and issues
Chapters have not been meeting
Still working on JROTC scholarships and how to present them to the recipients

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)
18 April state convention was cancelled
National commander stated the department elections are not yet official
- Because elections were not held in person
JROTC scholarship program is on hold and working presentation methods with different schools
- Trying to use student’s home addresses for mailing
ROTC awards for the Air Force were given to the University of Delaware administrator
Still seeking a contact for the ROTC awards for the Army
27 – 29 July: National Convention, Charlestown, WV

Commissioner Newman (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)
Delaware Community Foundation webinar today to discuss nonprofit, including trust fund, sponsorships
Spoke with a veteran who is interested in representing the Korean War Veterans of America on the commission

Commissioner Showell (At Large, affiliated with Delaware National Guard)
Attended Lt. Governor’s Veterans Arts and Humanities Summit in March
- Focused on pairing arts and humanities agencies with veterans’ needs
- Various veterans spoke of how art therapy helped them deal with issues
Sent a note to the boards and commissions chair on our vacant/expiring positions

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars)
Listened in on 16 April Wilmington VAMC webinar
MOWW museum activities have been cancelled
MOWW National Convention is scheduled for 5 – 8 August, Detroit, MI
MOWW JROTC Awards Program, mailed out 18 awards and certificates to schools

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)
Dover Mayors Crisis Awareness meetings have been cancelled
Doing wellness checks on former veteran clients
DelVets posts are closed
Figuring how to recognize scholarship recipients

Commissioner Stewart (At Large, affiliated with student veterans’ associations)
Nothing to report

TERM COMPLETION:
Bradley – 21 April 2020
Newman – 21 April 2020

EVENTS:
To be determined

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:

CLOSED SESSION:
SPECIAL SESSION:

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 21 April 2020 at 1000