MEETING MINUTES / 18 AUGUST 2020

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

ATTENDANCE:
Present: Baldwin, Lopez, Bradley, Farley, Lardizzone, Lopez, Magner, McMullen, Miller, Phillips, Sarg, Seppala, Showell, Sutton

Excused: Farley

Guests: Courtney Stewart (Deputy Secretary of State), Tina Foskey (Delaware Veterans Home), Michael Green (Delaware Veterans Home), Pat Cerchio (First State Women Warriors), Dave Skocik (Veterans Coalition)

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:
Acknowledged new commissioners: William Miller (American Legion), Paul Phillips (Veterans of Foreign Wars), and Gregory Sutton (At Large)

Moment of silence
Acknowledged Marines and one Sailor who lost their lives in California

Acknowledged new commissioners: William Miller (American Legion), Paul Phillips (Veterans of Foreign Wars), and Gregory Sutton (At Large) and they performed introductions

MEETING MINUTES:
Prior minutes were motioned to approve by Lardizzone seconded by Bradley

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:
Wilmington VAMC – Vince Kane, Director
Not present

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Tina Foskey, Director:
Census is 61 residents
Introduced regulatory specialist Michael Green
COVID focus survey was performed by the division of public health, ensured compliance with COVID regulations
Wilmington VA performed recognition survey for the kitchen and dining area
One resident was positive in July, had returned to the home from Bay Health hospital and tested positive, placed in isolation for 10 days, remained asymptomatic and returned to general population
There are no residents or staff positive now
Continue to retain 90 days of personal protective equipment
Holding off on admissions as a precaution
Still no visitations, adhering to state regulations, working on outside and window visitations
(Sarg) Are you offering Skype or other types of visits?
Yes
Residents are offered testing twice per month and staff are mandated to take tests every other week
(Sarg) Are you still accepting admission applications?
Yes, although not admitting residents, the applications are still being accepted
(Sarg) What’s the status of the call system?
ADT is scheduled to come out to assess the system to make the necessary updates to the call bell system, will have to wait until after COVID restrictions are lifted

Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:
Not present

PUBLIC COMMENTS:
Anna Lopez for Liz Byers
Women’s Tea is being planned, not sure of date
Give a Vet a Smile program is still happening
Stand Down is scheduled for 23 April
Seeking veteran business training center in Greenwood

Dave Skocik, Veterans Coalition
The trust fund dinner has been cancelled
Working on a direct mail fundraiser

COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Magner:
Interments – 80 (-1)
Cemeteries require 3x5 feet organization flags, should be an outdoor flag
- Should have two in reserve

Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:
Interments – 37 (+8)
National Wreaths Across America still plans on placing wreaths on Saturday, 19 December / 1030

Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:
Mental Health Summit is 31 August – 4 September in a virtual platform
Flu session is coming so get your immunizations in September and October
Department of VA has provided $538M in retroactive payments for Blue Water claims
Healthcare for adult special needs family members is being reviewed for supplemental Tricare

Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:
Requesting commissioner inputs for 2021 legislative recommendations, will present completed document at December meeting
(Baldwin) Spoke to Secretary of State and requested that Senator Poore provide feedback on the status of HB 265, 100% service-connected property/school tax exemption
(Baldwin) Need to seek sponsors for legislative proposals

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS:
DVTF Previous Month: Applications 4; Granted 4 (100%); Awarded $6,775.39; Balance - $93,000.00

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:
Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)
Chapter meeting on 13 August, selected new president and formed new council
Virtual international summit on 25 August
POW/MIA events, 15 – 18 September, are tentative
Legislative week is 6 – 9 October
Commissioner Miller (American Legion - AL)  
No change in national and departmental officers  
Headquarters and posts are operating  

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AMVETS)  
Nothing to report  

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)  
Submitted claims for 49 clients, 10 were DIC  
Departmental meeting first Wednesday in September and chapter meeting will be second Thursday in September  
Tornado damage (roof) at Camden location  

Vacant (Korean War Veterans)  
Nothing to report  

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)  
Nothing to report  

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)  
Forwarded MOAA lobby package to Senators Coons and Carper concerning 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, requested support of healthcare delivery system, preventing additional cuts to military medicine, stop handover of military hospitals to defense health agency  
MOAA has COVID 19 financial relief fund, giving up to $500.00 toward assistance from local chapters  

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)  
Department is on summer vacation  
National Service Officers program is suspended negatively impacting 98,000 veterans with Powers or Attorney, are referring those veterans to other service organizations with service officers  
Department is communicating through Zoom meetings  
Maintaining veterans group meeting through Zoom  

Commissioner Phillips (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)  
Posts are open  
Service officer is located at the Wilmington Vet Center, no longer at Wilmington benefits office  

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)  
Cancelled October golf tournament  
Wondered how JROTC units would operate virtually  

Commissioner Showell (At Large, affiliated with Delaware National Guard)  
Deployment event for 238th Aviation Regiment, on 9 August, 50 soldiers are deploying  
Former TAG General Timmons passed away, Facebook livestream viewing is today / 1400 and a celebration of life service will be in October  
DNG Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on 12 September / 1300, honoring COL Showell, CWO Jester, CCSM Sine, Facebook livestream viewing  

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars)  
No longer MOWW departmental commander
Commissioner Sutton (At Large)
Discussed Delaware State Housing Authority’s Delaware Housing Assistance Program which offers rental or mortgage payment assistance

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)
Continues to receive calls from previous wounded warrior clients
Del Vets executive meetings have been in person
Preparing for first general membership meeting, with a Zoom option
Serving food at the post three times a week
Departmental newsletter is difficult to produce due to limited activities
Mayor’s crisis committee is being re-evaluated for future direction
Participated in University of Delaware fellowship forum where students interviewed female veterans seeking information about their service challenges to forward to the Department of Defense

TERM COMPLETION:
Baldwin – 9 September 2020
McMullen – 9 September 2020
Showell – 9 September 2020

EVENTS:
There was an inquiry about Vet Fest, it is scheduled for 26 September / 0830 – 1230, Whitehall in an in-person and virtual format

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
None

NEW BUSINESS:
None

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:
(Sarg) Sussex Central and Sussex Technical High School’s JROTC unit was disbanding at the end of the school year

SPECIAL SESSION:
Director Kirby announced his resignation affective Friday, 28 August

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 15 September 2020 at 1000
LOCATION: Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs