

## **NH STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting Date: 2 May 2023**

**Location: ECTC, 722 Riverwood Dr., Pembroke, NH**

### **OFFICERS and VOTING MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS**

**Chairman** - Paul Loyd

**Vice Chair** - Andrew Patterson

**Secretary** - Denise DeBlois

**Treasurer** - Kelly Dobens

**Chair Emeritus** - David Kenney

**Chaplain** - Armand Soucy

#### **Air Force Association**

Kevin Grady (prim)

#### **Air Force Sergeants Association**

#### **American Legion**

Robert Blais (alt)

#### **AUSA - Col. Cross Chapter**

Greg d'Arbonne (prim)

#### **Catholic War Veterans**

Denise DeBlois (prim)

Robert Guldner (alt)

Armand Soucy (alt)

#### **Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association**

#### **Disabled American Veterans**

Rick Borrazas (prim)

Robert Guldner (alt)

#### **Korean War Veterans**

#### **Marine Corps League**

#### **Military Officers Association (MOAA)**

Peter Burdett (prim)

Robert Jaffin (alt)

William Luti (alt)

Laurence Miller (alt)

**Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)**

**National Guard Association of NH**

Steve Greco (alt)

**NH Army Retiree Council**

Mike Rice (alt)

**NH National Guard Enlisted Association**

Mike Rice (alt)

**NH Veterans Association**

Kelly Dobens (prim)

**Patriot Resilient Leader Institute (Camp Resilience)**

**Reserve Officers Association of NH**

David Kenney (prim)

**Rolling Thunder**

Robert Brown (alt)

**Veterans of Foreign Wars**

Paul Lloyd (alt)

Denis Querrad (alt)

**Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA-41)**

Raymond Goulet, Jr. (prim)

Robert Heichlinger (alt)

**LEGISLATIVE ADVISORS - non voting**

**Governor's Office** - Trevor McAden

**Senator Maggie Hassan** - Justin Troiano

**Senator Jeanne Shaheen** - Chris Scott

**Congressman Chris Pappas** - Brett Lavasseur

**Congresswoman Annie Kuster** - Molly Small

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS**

Rep. Terry Roy

**COMMITTEE ADVISORS/AGENCIES:**

**VAMC, Manchester, NH** - Kevin Forrest, Director

**NHNG** - BG David Mikolaities, Adjutant General NHNG

Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General

**NH Veterans Home** - Kimberly MacKay

Margaret "Peggy" LaBrecque, Sage Emeritus

**Martins Point** - John Reed and Brenda Pennels

**State Veterans Council** - Jim Adams

**Easterseals/Veterans Count** - Andrea Christoffels

**GUESTS:**

Michael Moffett - Chair House Veterans Committee

Ken Christopher - VA Congressional Liaison

Jim Tirabassi - Rock in 4 Vets

**OPEN MEETING/CALL TO ORDER:**

Paul Lloyd, Chairman, convened meeting at 1700.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Chairman

**Invocation:** Armand Soucy.

**Welcome - Remarks of the Chair:** None

**Secretary's Report:**

Meeting has a quorum; attendance on file.

There minutes of the last meeting on 4 April 2023 was approved and placed in the record.

**Treasurer's Report:** Account balance is \$652.67. No change.

**Comments from Vice Chair:** Position vacant.

**Comments from Director Emeritus: David Kenney**

More veterans need to go to the Liberty House food pantry due to lost benefits.

**Guest Speakers:**

1. Michael Moffett: He is Chairman of the State-Federal Relations & Veterans Affairs.

Contact information: Cell: 603-491-0553; Email: [mofmichael@aim.com](mailto:mofmichael@aim.com)

There will be a Legislative Scramble on June 26th with proceeds to benefit the Liberty House.

2. Jim Tirabassi: He is with Rock 4 Vets. Information was emailed to the members.

May 6th: Rock n' Roll Circus at the Strand in Dover, NH.

Enjoy a wonderful show and support Homeland Heroes at the same time.

Contact information: Cell: 978-979-2076; Email: [jim@alivenkickingprod.com](mailto:jim@alivenkickingprod.com);

[www.facebook.com/Rockin4Vets](http://www.facebook.com/Rockin4Vets)

**SUPPORTING AGENCY REPORTS:**

**Manchester VA Update:**

Director Kevin Forrest was not present.

Ken Christopher reported. He is the Congressional Liaison.

Contact information: Tel. 603-624-4366 ext.1749

Cell: 603-518-0807; Email: [Kenneth.Christopher@va.gov](mailto:Kenneth.Christopher@va.gov)

He provided an update on the VA.

Congressional Tour highlighting infrastructure needs and future projects on April 14th.

Historic significance of Manchester VA - April 26-27th - requirement for demolition of outlying building.

Personnel Updates: New Hires

Dr. Brian Sweeney - Chief of Urgent Care

Dr. Melissa-Martinez Adorno - Regional Gynecologist for Manchester and Bedford VAMC's.

Dr. Caitlin Campbell - Staff Psychologist in Primary Care - Mental Health Integration.

Dr. Chaudhuri - working as Sensory and Physical Rehab Service Line as a Physician-Psychiatrist and supporting Polytrauma/TBI.

In the Queue: Addictions Psychiatrist, Chief of Medicine, Radiologist, and Psychiatrist.

Construction:

Mountain Entrance - expected completion is May 8, 2023.

Eagle Entrance - new traffic pattern out front.

Flagpole - main flagpole in front removed with a new one to follow.

Service Updates:

Nurses Week May 8-May 12, 2023.

American Indian and Alaska Native Copayment Exemption:

- retroactive reimbursement from copayments on or after Jan 5, 2022.

- eliminates future copayment for health care and urgent care visits.

Cessation of Suspension of VHA Collections Activities and Extension of VHA Claim and Appeal filing Deadlines - June 9, 2023.

- travel claims will revert to the 30 day calendar timeframe for submissions.

Key Items:

Daisy Award: Registered Nurse Amy LaBarre, Home Based Primary Care.

Masking Guidelines: masks are only required in the Community Living Center.

No COVID testing requirements for visitors at the CLC.

May 29th: Memorial Day at the VAMC at 10:00 am.

June 7th: VSO Recruitment Day from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm.

**DMAVS Update:** Shawn Buck gave an oral report.

NHSVC (Shawn Buck): A lot is going on. Sign up for the newsletter.

Flags go out on Thursday, May 25th at 1:00 PM.

Walkway Cleanup: Sunday, May 28th (rescheduled from last week).

Memorial Day Ceremony - Tuesday, May 30th at 11:00 AM. This years host is the American Legion.

Flag retrieval is on Thursday, June 1st at 1:00 PM.

The 2nd Annual Memorial Planting Event is June 1st at 11:00 AM.

Job openings for 2 full time and 1 part time positions.

OVS (Bill Gaudreau):

The Division of Community Based Military Programs recently presented “A Conversation with a VSO as part of its NH DMAVS Frago Series. The conversation was all about VA claims. Links to the webinar can be found on the DMAVS website and its You Tube channel. The next presentation ”Boots to Books” is on June 15th. Pre-registration is required.

Dept. of Military Services:

The Housing and Suicide Prevention Program Specialist is engaging with NH landlords and Property Managers to see if they are will to accept Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers (HUD-VASH) as mens to house homeless veterans. Several landlords expressed interest.

The department has provided funding to Easterseals NH and Partnership for Public Health to improve Service members and Veterans mental health by improving access to behavioral health services and reduce Veteran social isolation.

Easterseals NH has received an increase in new referrals for clinical mental health services through outreach to community health providers and education providers about “Ask the Question: have you or a family member ever served in the military?”

Partnership for Public Health is participating in coalition building to improve Veteran quality of life with area partners throughout the state.

**NH Veterans Home:** Commandant Kimberly MacKay gave an oral report.

Resident status: 127 veterans (116 men and 11 women). Average age is 83.

VA Annual Survey: the survey was conducted and the results were excellent. There were no clinical findings. There were four level life safety concerns: a placard missing over a fire-extinguisher, annual fire system inspections should be done semiannually, trash rooms must be vented and all electrical medical equipment must be inspected on a regular basis. All issues have been resolved or in the process of being addressed.

Budget update: The presentation to the Governor and House has been completed. The NHVH is scheduled to finish up with the Senate on May 4th. There are no concerns at this time.

Covid update: still in an outbreak status due to staff testing positive. A veteran has not tested positive in over a month. There are plans for changes in the covid protocols with May 11th approaching. Unmasking in the facility on May 12th and following standard infection practices.

Thank you to the Air Force Sergeant Association who donated \$20,000 to purchase all the items on the resident's wish list. The residents and staff are truly appreciative of all the support provided.

A new video was created to be used for job fairs, orientation, and other events. The video includes interviews with residents, volunteers, staff, and families. It is on You Tube under the New Hampshire Veterans Home. "Please take a look at the video. I am sure you will enjoy it."

Memorial Day: The ceremony will be held on Tuesday, May 30th at 2:30 pm in the NHVH Town Hall.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Armand Soucy: The Catholic War Veterans needs help in order to continue the 100 Nights of Remembrance service at the Mount Calvary Cemetery in Manchester, NH. Buglers are needed to sound TAPS at 7:00 PM beginning Memorial Day until

September 11th. CWV has been able to keep this going for the past 16 years. The original members that started the ceremony have passed away or are unable to continue due to poor health. CWV is asking other organizations to help with one night per week or one whole week. Any assistance is appreciated.

Point of Contact is Denise DeBlois, CWV Post 1624 Commander. She can be reached at 603-785-5718 or email: dmdeblois65@gmail.com.

2. Nominations for Vice-Chair and Treasurer.

There were no nominations for Vice-Chair.

There was a nomination for Kelly Dobens for Treasurer. She accepted.

Nominations are still open for Vice Chair at the June meeting.

### **LEGISLATIVE BRIEFINGS:**

Kevin Grady, Legislative Chair, gave a brief report and update on LSR's.

The status of bills was distributed via email.

The first 3 bills have gone through the Senate and House and have gone to the Governor.

HB 163 - OTP  
HB 189 - OTP  
HB 206 - OTP  
HB 330 - OTP  
SB 45 - OTP  
SB 174 - OTP

**LEGISLATIVE ADVISORS:** Written reports attached or emailed separately if submitted to Chair.

**Trevor McAden ((Gov. Chris Sununu):** not present.

**Chris Scott (Senator Shaheen):** brief report.

**Justin Troiano (Senator Hassan):** brief report

**Molly Small (Rep. Annie Kuster):** brief report..

**Brett Levasseur (Rep. Chris Pappas):** brief report.

**Upcoming Events:**

13 May 2023 - Air Force Liaison Admissions Event - 9:00 am.

1 June 2023 - Our Community Salutes - Fisher Cats Game - 4:00 PM.

1st Wednesday - Monthly POW/MIA Vigil - 1900 at Veteran's Park, Manchester, NH

4th Tuesday - Monthly POW/MIA Vigil - 1900 at Langdon Park, Portsmouth, NH

Every Thursday - Weekly POW/MIA vigil - 1900 at Hesky Park, Meredith, NH

1st Friday - Monthly POW/MIA vigil - 1900 at Pine Grove Cemetery, Salem, NH

**Next meeting date:** Tuesday, 6 June 2023

**Adjourn Meeting:** 1743

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise DeBlois, Secretary